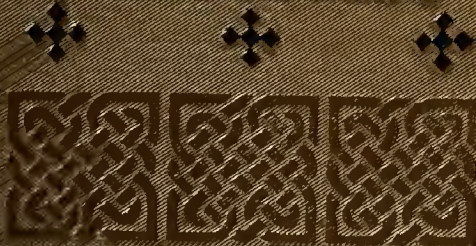


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THE SAYINGS
OF THE JEWISH FATHERS
(PIRKE ABOTH)



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THE SAYINGS OF
THE JEWISH FATHERS
(PIRKE ABOTH)

TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW BY
W. O. E. OESTERLEY, D.D.

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EDITORS' PREFACE

THE object of this series of translations is primarily to furnish students with short, cheap, and handy text-books, which, it is hoped, will facilitate the study of the particular texts in class under competent teachers. But it is also hoped that the volumes will be acceptable to the general reader who may be interested in the subjects with which they deal. It has been thought advisable, as a general rule, to restrict the notes and comments to a small compass; more especially as, in most cases, excellent works of a more elaborate character are available. Indeed, it is much to be desired that these translations may have the effect of inducing readers to study the larger works.

Our principal aim, in a word, is to make some difficult texts, important for the study of Christian origins, more generally accessible in faithful and scholarly translations.

In most cases these texts are not available in a cheap and handy form. In one or two cases texts have been included of books which are available in the official Apocrypha; but in every such case reasons exist for putting forth these texts in a new translation, with an Introduction, in this Series.

W. O. E. OESTERLEY.
G. H. Box.

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INTRODUCTION

§ I.—Title, Contents, and Character of the Tractate.

THE title of this tractate means literally "Sections," or "Chapters," of the Fathers. The "Sections" consist, however, in the main, of short sayings of the early Jewish Fathers or Rabbis (properly "Teachers"); hence the name "Sayings of the Fathers," by which it is usually known in English. But, inasmuch as the sayings are for the most part of an ethical character, the tractate often goes under the name of "Ethics of the Fathers." The Mishnah, to which this tractate belongs, consists of six "Orders" (*Sedarim*), each of which contains a varying number of tractates; the fourth "Order" is *Nezikin* ("Damages"), and has ten tractates, of which *Pirke Aboth* is the ninth. In Jewish literature it is usually referred to in the abbreviated form *Aboth*.

In its present form *Pirke Aboth* consists of six chapters; the contents of these are briefly as follows: Chapter I. records sayings of Jewish sages from Simeon the Just, high-priest from about 226-198 B.C.,¹ to Simeon II., son of Gamliel I.,² who died about 70 A.D. The names of the Fathers are given in chronological order. Chapter II. continues what was begun in Chapter I., but the names are not all in chronological sequence. The sayings are mostly those of Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai, of his teacher Hillel, and of some of his most prominent pupils; the period is roughly from soon after the destruction of Jerusalem to the first quarter of the second century. In Chapter III. the names of the Fathers and their sayings seem to have been put down in a very haphazard way; there is no attempt at chronological order, nor is there any sign of arrangement according to

¹ See note on i. 1.

² See notes on i. 16, 17, 18.

subject-matter. The Fathers mentioned lived, some in the latter part of the first, and former half of the second, century A.D., and others during the second century; none are of later date than this. It is the same in Chapter IV., though two Fathers are mentioned who lived in the early part of the third century. In Chapter V. the sayings are all anonymous, and they are of a character different from those of the earlier chapters; they are for the most part tabulations of certain things by number, this idea being a development of something similar found in some passages of the Book of Proverbs, *e.g.* vi. 16. Towards the end of this chapter a few sayings occur which are more in the form of the earlier ones, though somewhat longer. But, taken as a whole, the sayings in Chapter V. are distinctly inferior to those in Chapters I.-IV. They contain some quaint legendary matter, some of which is interesting from the point of view of folk-lore; there are also a number of remarks which show much knowledge of human nature. Chapter VI. is universally recognised as a later addition,¹ and it is full of borrowings from the earlier chapters. It is called "Kinyan Torah" ("The Acquisition of the Torah"); the name "Perek (Chapter) of Rabbi Meir" has been given to it because the first saying is one of his; it is quite possible that the sayings in this chapter ascribed to particular Rabbis are genuine, and therefore as old as many of those in the earlier chapters; but the greater part of the material is anonymous. Its title, "Kinyan Torah," is thoroughly appropriate.

The sayings, in general, of this tractate are ethical-religious, and are full of sound counsel and guidance; indeed, the tractate may be regarded as belonging to the Wisdom literature of the Jews; it is often reminiscent of the Book of Proverbs, which, in addition, is quoted again and again, and of the Wisdom of Ben Sira; its "humanness," especially, constantly reminds one of Ben Sira's sayings. It occupied, and still occupies, a position in the Jewish Church comparable with that of the Wisdom of Ben Sira in the early Christian Church; but, more than this, it has, ever since the eleventh century, been incorporated in the Jewish Liturgy. It used to be read in the Synagogue service for

¹ It is not included in the Mishnah on which the Palestinian Talmud rests; see Lowe's edition of this, pp. 143^b ff. (1883).

Sabbath afternoon during the summer months ; but usually it is now read chapter by chapter on the six Sabbaths after Passover respectively at the afternoon service. This use differs, however, in different countries. This liturgical use of *Pirke Aboth* has resulted in making it the most popular and best known of all Rabbinical writings. "The Talmudic saying, that *Whosoever would be pious must fulfil the dicta of the Fathers*, is quoted by Rabbinical commentators in their introductions to *Pirke Aboth*, and the tract has been described, with reference to this saying, as *Mishnath ha-Chasidim*, a course of instruction for the pious."¹

§ II.—Importance of the Tractate for the Study of the New Testament.

As the oldest collection, in post-Biblical times, of the sayings of Jewish sages,² *Pirke Aboth* possesses the importance which naturally attaches to any ancient authoritative document. It is also important—its perusal will show this—as containing a great deal of material which is of permanent value for its own sake. But its special importance lies, we venture to think, in the insight it gives into the way of thought, the general mental outlook, and the method of expression of the early Synagogue ; for the knowledge of the Jewish spirit which is gained by the study of this tractate is of the greatest importance to the student of the New Testament. Above all, the doctrinal standpoint of Judaism here presented and put forth by the greatest of Israel's early post-Biblical teachers is—we believe it is no exaggeration to say so—indispensable for the thorough understanding of New Testament doctrinal teaching. Very instructive, too, is the significant contrast in some vital particulars between its teaching and that of both the Founder of Christianity and St. Paul. These things are so important that a few illustrative examples will not be out of place ; but to gain a real insight into their importance and

¹ Taylor, p. 3.

² We are not forgetting the book of the Wisdom of Ben Sirā. This, however, is not a collection of sayings by a large variety of sages, handed down by word of mouth, and ultimately gathered together ; but a written composition from the pen of a single writer.

significance demands a careful reading of the translation of the tractate together with the notes ; in these latter many references to the New Testament will be found.

We may refer first to a few of the many words and expressions which are common to this tractate and the New Testament ; the interest of these is that they point to a common stock of language, both Hebrew and Greek, lying behind both ; and, therefore, one can be illustrated from the other in their use of them. There is frequent reference to the "wise men," called *Chakamim*, as well as (though not so often) to the *Sopherim*, or "Scribes," so often mentioned in the New Testament, e.g. Matt. xxiii. 34 : "I send unto you prophets, and wise men (σοφούς), and scribes (γραμματεῖς)"; cf. 1 Cor. i. 20. Though an actual equivalent of νομικός ("Lawyer"; cf. Matt. xx. 35, etc.) does not occur, the tractate is full of examples of men versed in the Law. The term *Rabbi* (cf. Ραββεί, Matt. xxvi. 49 ; Mark x. 51 ; John i. 39, etc. ; it does not occur in Luke) is found on every page ; this is transliterated from Hebrew to Greek, like *Golgotha* (Matt. xxvii. 23) and *Mammon* (Matt. vi. 24), words which also appear in the tractate ; but there are also a number of cases in which Greek words are Hebraised, e.g. ἀρραβών ("earnest," "pledge," iii. 23) ; cf. 2 Cor. i. 22 ; Eph. i. 13, 14 ; θυρεός ("shield," iv. 13) ; cf. Eph. vi. 16 ; κατηγορος ("accuser," iv. 13) ; cf. Rev. xii. 10 ; πίναξ ("writing-tablet," iii. 23) ; cf. πινακίδιον, Luke i. 63 ; παράκλητος ("comforter," iv. 13) ; cf. John xiv. 6 ; 1 John ii. 1 ; σπόγγος ("sponge," v. 17) ; cf. Matt. xxvii. 48. Further, there are many expressions in the tractate which illustrate equivalents in the New Testament, e.g. the substitution of "Heaven" for "God" ; this, together with other means of avoiding direct mention of God, occurs very often ; the same thing is found in the New Testament, especially in the expression "kingdom of Heaven," and "the Lord" (= *Adonai*, written " in the tractate). Then we have the expressions : "the world to come" (*ha-'Olam ha-ba*, e.g. ii. 8), as distinct from "this world" (*ha-'Olam ha-zeh*) ; cf. Eph. i. 21, ὁ αἰὼν ὁ μέλλων and ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος ; cf. also Mark. x. 30 ; Luke xviii. 30 ; the comprehensive word *Berioth*, "mankind" as a creation (i. 12, and often elsewhere in the tractate), for which κτίσις is the exact equivalent ; cf. Mark xvi. 15, κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει ; see also Rom. i. 25 ; viii. 19 ;

Col. i. 15, etc.; "the many" (*ha-Rabbim*, v. 20); *cp.* Rom. v. 19: . . . ἀμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν οἱ πολλοί; the use of the word "way" (ii. 1, etc.) is precisely that found in such passages as Matt. vii. 13, 14; Acts xviii. 26; xix. 9, etc.; so, too, *Abodah*, i. 2, used of the "Service" in the Temple; this has its equivalent in λατρεία, Rom. ix. 4. Then there is the expression "guilty of" (*chayyab*, i. 13, etc.), which has its equivalent in ἔνοχος, Matt. xxvi. 66; 1 Cor. xi. 27; James ii. 10, etc. The word "righteousness" in the sense of almsgiving (*Zedakah*), which occurs often in the tractate, is used in the identical way in the New Testament; very instructive here is the passage, Matt. vi. 1-4: προσέχετε τὴν δικαιοσύνην ὑμῶν μὴ ποιεῖν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων . . . ὅταν οὖν ποιῆς ἐλεημοσύνην . . . The expression "people of the land" (*'am ha-aretz*), in the sense of those who are ignorant of the Law, illustrates John vii. 49: ὁ ὄχλος οὗτος ὁ μὴ γινώσκων τὸν νόμον ἐπάρατοί εἰσιν. The expression "Peace" (*Shalom*) for greeting a man (*e.g.* in iv. 20 and elsewhere) has its equivalent in Luke x. 5: πρῶτον λέγετε Εἰρήνην τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ, and other New Testament passages. The form of quotations from, and references to, the Old Testament is the same in the New Testament as in this tractate; an especially instructive example is the expression "in David" in several instances when the Psalms are quoted; *cp.* Acts i. 16; ii. 25; although the exact words do not occur in the New Testament, the *form* does, *e.g.* "in Hosea" (Rom. ix. 25), "in Elijah" (Rom. xi. 2). We have also the expression "our father Abraham" (v. 3); *cp.* Matt. iii. 9; Luke xvi. 24; John. viii. 53: μὴ σὺ μέγιστον εἶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ; Rom. iv. 1; and the still more interesting words in v. 22: "Be strong . . . to do the will of thy Father which is in Heaven"; *cp.* Matt. vi. 9, etc.

Then we have many thoughts and ideas which are important and full of interest for the study of the New Testament; the following may serve as examples: In ii. 1 it is said: "Keep in mind three things, and thou wilt not come into the power of sin"; one is "all thy works written in a book"; with this *cp.* Rev. xx. 12: ". . . and the déad were judged out of the things which were written in the books according to their works." In iii. 23 there is a reference to the Messianic banquet in the words: "The judgement is a judgement of truth; and everything

is prepared for the banquet"; this illustrates such passages as Matt. viii. 11: "Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down (*ἀνακλιθήσονται*) with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven"; *cp.* also Matt. xxvi. 29; Rev. xix. 9. In vi. 6 the Torah is spoken of as "clothing" a man "with humility and fear"; both in thought and language we are reminded here of the words in 1 Pet. v. 5: "... be clothed with humility." In iv. 17 the expression "the crown of priesthood" recalls "a royal priesthood" in 1 Pet. ii. 9. The "crown of Torah" (i. 13; iv. 17; vi. 7), remembering that the Torah is referred to as the source of life (vi. 7 and elsewhere), is reminiscent of James i. 12: "... he shall receive the crown of life." Striking, too, are the words in iii. 6: "Whosoever takes upon him the yoke of the Torah . . .," in view of Matt. xi. 29, 30: "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me . . ."; also in the next verse (iii. 7) the words: "When ten sit together and are occupied with the Torah, the Shekhinah is among them," with which *cp.* Matt. xviii. 20: "For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." It is very instructive to notice how often Christ substitutes Himself for the Torah. In v. 19, 21 there are references to the controversy or "gainsaying" of Korah, and to "Balaam the wicked," which recall similar references in Jude 11: "the error of Balaam" and "the gainsaying of Korah." In vi. 2 the "Bath-Kol" is spoken of, and this idea underlies such passages as Matt. iii. 13-17: "a voice out of the heavens"; *cp.* Mark ix. 7; John xii. 28-30; Acts ix. 3-7; x. 13, 15; Rev. x. 4; xiv. 13.

These are but a few examples, very far from being exhaustive, of the way in which *Pirke Aboth* illustrates the New Testament. There are a number of other ways, in addition to those mentioned, by which it could be shown how very useful this tractate, the only one of its kind, is to students of the New Testament; in the matter of customs, manners, numbers, archæological points, comparisons, mental pictures, allegories, parables, etc., an immense deal is offered in this short tractate. To illustrate all these with examples here would be easy enough, but space would not permit of it. A glance at the notes in the following commentary will show how often passages in the New Testament are referred to; a careful reading of the text will probably suggest others.

But even more important than all that has been said is the doctrinal standpoint of *Pirke Aboth*; for here we get, as nowhere else, the doctrinal position of orthodox Judaism as this existed during the New Testament period. The doctrine of God, of the Law, of Works, of Merit, of Sin, of Grace and Free-will, not to mention subsidiary points, are all referred to in the tractate specifically, or incidentally, or implicitly. From this point of view the importance of *Pirke Aboth* for the study and understanding of the New Testament can hardly be exaggerated. But obviously these things can only be referred to here; to deal with them at all adequately a separate volume would be required.

§ III.—The Authors of the Sayings.

The authors of the sayings preserved in *Pirke Aboth* are many in number; altogether sixty-five are named. Several hundreds of Rabbis are mentioned in the Mishnah; and it is sometimes difficult to understand why some of these names have been omitted from, and others included in, this tractate. Apart from "the men of the Great Synagogue" (so-called) to whom collectively three sayings are attributed, the list of names begins with that of Simeon the Just; this was, in all probability, the high-priest Simeon II., who filled this office 226-198 B.C.; and it goes down to Rabbis who lived during the third century of our era. Roughly speaking, therefore, we are dealing with the sayings of Jewish teachers who lived during a period of four centuries, or a little over—and this a period of vital importance for doctrinal Judaism.

A few words regarding some of the most important of these teachers will not be without interest.

Simeon II. has an interest for us on account of Ben Sira's panegyric in Sir. l. 1-24, where he is spoken of thus:

"Great among his brethren and the glory of his people
Was Simeon the son of Jochanan (= Onias) the priest . . .
How glorious was he when he looked forth from the Tent,
And when he came out from the Sanctuary!
Like a morning-star from between the clouds,
And like the full moon on the feast-days;
Like the sun shining upon the Temple of the Most High,
And like the rainbow becoming visible in the cloud . . ."

Simeon ben Shetach, of later date, is said to have been the brother of the queen Alexandra (Salome), who reigned B.C. 76-67; whether this was so or not, certain it is that he enjoyed great influence during her reign. This influence had important consequences, for he was the leader of the Pharisaic party, and succeeded in superseding the Sadducees, who had, in the main, been the dominating party hitherto. Simeon ben Shetach was a great champion of the specifically Pharisaic interpretation of the Law; and it was largely due to him that the Pharisees became permanently the religious leaders of the people, and thus assumed the position which is so graphically reflected in the Gospels. He did much to restrict divorce, which had become very prevalent under the Sadducean régime. He appears also to have been a great religious educationist, for he laboured successfully for the establishment of schools in the larger cities, where the young might be instructed in the Bible. A story illustrating his character is told in one of the *Midrashim* (on Deut. iii. 5) to the following effect: "Once his pupils presented him with an ass which they had purchased from an Arab. On the neck of the animal they found a costly jewel; whereupon they joyfully told their master that he might now cease toiling [he was by trade a linen-draper in a small way], since the proceeds from the jewel would make him wealthy. Simeon, however, replied that the Arab had sold them the ass only, and not the jewel. And he returned the gem to the Arab, who exclaimed, 'Praised be the God of Simeon ben Shetach!'"¹

The two best-known names, however, mentioned in this tractate are *Hillel* and *Shammai*. Both were, in all probability, alive at the time of the birth of Christ. As is well known, these two were the originators of two great schools of thought within Judaism. "It is notorious that the Shammaites were rigorous to excess in their requirements, and were the champions of a narrow and exclusive form of legal piety. Their attitude to the outside world was also harsh and unsympathetic. Their influence up to the catastrophe of A.D. 70 seems to have been in the ascendant; but later the peace-loving and milder party of Hillel triumphed, and the Oral Law was revised in accordance with Hillelite views.

¹ *IE* xi. 358 b.

It is probable, therefore, that in the time of Christ the question of ritual washing of hands, *e.g.*, was a party one, and that our Lord strongly opposed the Shammaite view. In fact, the impression is almost irresistible that the denunciations of the Pharisees occurring in the Gospels were directed primarily against a Shammaite section; this would explain the apparently strange phenomenon that while, on the one hand, we read of these stern denunciations, it is, on the other hand, obvious to any impartial reader of the Gospels that a most friendly intercourse existed between Christ and the Pharisees.”¹

Gamliel, whose name occurs after these two (he died in A.D. 52), has a special interest for us because a speech of his is reported in Acts v. 34-40, and also because he was St. Paul's teacher (Acts xxii. 3). The description of him in Acts v. 34 (“a doctor of the Law, had in honour of all the people”) fully bears out what we know of him from other sources. It should be added that some scholars maintain that the Gamliel referred to in Acts is the second of this name, the grandson of the former, who died about A.D. 110.

The name of *Jochanan ben Zakkai* is one of great importance in Jewry; his exact date is uncertain, but since he was a pupil of Hillel his activity must have begun well before the destruction of Jerusalem. It is said of him (*Rosh hashana* 30*b*) that his life was divided into three periods; in the first he was a merchant, in the second a student, and in the third a teacher.² Jochanan ben Zakkai's great claim to celebrity lies largely in the fact that he founded the Academy of Jamnia, and became its first president; so that it was he who, after the destruction of Jerusalem, made Jamnia the official centre of Judaism. He was a great teacher; one of his parables is worth quoting because it is so reminiscent of some of the Gospel parables; in illustration of something that he was teaching he said: “It is like unto a king who invited his servants to a feast; but he fixed no time (as to when the feast should begin). The wise ones (among his servants) arrayed themselves and sat down at the entrance of the king's palace.

¹ Oesterley and Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, pp. 129 f. (2nd ed.).

² *JE* vii. 214 a.

They said: 'Though something may yet be wanting, the feast will soon be ready; let us be prepared.' The foolish ones (among his servants) went to their work. They said: 'No feast without preparation' (*i.e.* there is plenty of time yet). Suddenly the king called his servants in to the feast. The wise ones entered in before him fully arrayed as they were. But the foolish ones entered in before him with soiled garments. Then did the king take pleasure in the wise servants, but he was wroth with the foolish ones. And he said: 'These who have arrayed themselves for the feast, let them sit down and eat and drink; but those who did not array themselves for the feast, let them remain standing and watch the others.'¹ Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai had five pupils who all appear to have become distinguished teachers; a number of their sayings are preserved in *Pirke Aboth*.

Of the many other Rabbis mentioned in the tractate two more may be briefly referred to, one of somewhat later date. The first is *Jehudah ha-Nasi* (Judah the Prince), the celebrated compiler of the Mishnah, though the Mishnah as we now have it is a later recension of his work. He is known by the title of, and is spoken of as, "Rabbi" pure and simple. His date is approximately A.D. 136-217. And the second is *Rabbi Akiba*; of this teacher it has been said that he, "to a degree beyond any other, deserves to be called the father of Rabbinical Judaism";² he lived from about the middle of the first century A.D. to about A.D. 130. He is said to have been connected with Bar Cochba in his revolt against the Roman power; but this is doubtful; what is certainly true is that he regarded Bar Cochba as the promised Messiah. He suffered death at the hands of the Romans, but whether this was because he disregarded, on religious grounds, the edicts of Hadrian, or whether it was due to political entanglements on his part, is uncertain. One saying of his is well worth quoting on account of its similarity with the words of Christ recorded in Luke xiv. 8 ff.: "Take thy place a few seats below thy rank until thou art bidden to take a higher place; for it is better that they should say to thee, 'Come up higher,' than that they should bid thee 'Go down lower.'"³

¹ T.B. *Shabbath* 153 a, quoted by Fiebig, *Die Gleichnissreden Jesu*, p. 18.

² Ginsberg, *JE* i. 304 b. ³ *Wayyikra Rabbah* i. 5; quoted in *JE* i. 305 b.

§ IV.—The Manuscripts.

The text of *Pirke Aboth* is, with few exceptions, quite straightforward; the various readings do not often affect the sense of a passage. In the following pages the Hebrew text used is that of Strack (see § V.). A certain number of various readings will be found referred to in the notes; these have been given where they have seemed to offer points of interest, though sometimes the interest is slight. For detailed critical notes the reader is referred to Taylor's edition, pp. (1)–(51), and Hoffmann's notes, as well as those of Strack.

The more important manuscripts of *Pirke Aboth* are the following:—

- Codex Berolin. Orient. 627. 17th century. (*Pirke Aboth* begins on fol. 17 *b*.)
- Codex Berolin. Orient. 569. (The text is wanting from iv. 23 to the end.)
- Codex Berolin. Orient. 629. 17th century. (*Pirke Aboth* begins on fol. 12 *b*.)
- Codex Berolin. Orient. 567. (Contains a Hebrew translation of the Arabic commentary on the Mishnah by Maimonides.)
- A MS. belonging to Dr. Chamizer, of Leipzig. (This is a Prayer Book containing the ritual of the Jews of Fez, in North Africa. *Pirke Aboth* is furnished with short explanatory notes in Arabic; it belongs to the 17th century.)
- A MS. in Cambridge University Library, Add. 470. (Taylor's text is taken from this MS., with the exception of Chapter VI., which is from an edition of the Ashkenazic Prayer Book.)

There are also several other Cambridge MSS., and some in the British Museum, enumerated by Taylor.

§ V.—Bibliography.

- Taylor, *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers* (2nd ed. 1897).
- Hoffmann, *Mischnaiot*, pp. 327–365 (1898).
- Strack, *Die Sprüche der Väter* (1901).
- Fiebig, *Pirque' aboth* (1906).

Herford, *Pirke Aboth*, in Charles's "The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament," vol. ii. pp. 686-714 (1913).

The three first of the above contain the Hebrew text. The following volumes, among others, have been utilised, and will be found helpful:—

Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, 2 vols. (1884, 1890).

Schechter, *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan* . . . (1887); cited as *AN*.

Weber, *Juedische Theologie* (2nd ed. 1897); cited as Weber.

Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, 3 vols. and Index volume (4th ed. 1901-9); cited as Schürer.

Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, 2 vols. (1903); cited as Jastrow.

Strack, *Einleitung in den Talmud* (4th ed. 1908).

Krauss, *Talmudische Archäologie*, 3 vols. (1910-12); cited as Krauss.

Oesterley, *Ecclesiasticus* (in the "Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges") (1912); cited as Sir.

Abrahams's edition of the Jewish Prayer Book; cited as Abrahams.

Gerald Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* (1916).

The Jewish Encyclopædia; cited as *JE*.

It has not been thought necessary to specify the individual manuscripts in cases of various readings, since these are rarely of real importance. The student who desires details of these will find them in the editions of Taylor and Strack.

The chapter divisions are those found in all printed editions, but the verse divisions, which vary in the different editions, are here arranged in accordance with the individual sayings. Taylor's verse divisions are, however, added in brackets, as his edition is the most important English one. In Chapter II. they are the same as in Taylor's edition.

Words in brackets are not part of the text, but are added to make the sense clearer.

Words in square brackets are later interpolations found in the text.

The abbreviation T.B. denotes Talmud Babli (the Babylonian Talmud).

PIRKE ABOOTH

CHAPTER I

1. (1) MOSES received the Torah from Sinai,¹ and he delivered² it to Joshua;³ and Joshua (delivered it) to the Elders;⁴ and the Elders (delivered it) to the Prophets;⁵ and the Prophets delivered it to the men of the Great Synagogue.⁶

¹ **Moses received the Torah from Sinai:** Torah (without the article) means here the entire body of divine laws, both written and oral. It includes the *הוראה שבעל פה* (oral teaching) and the *מסורה* (tradition [of the fathers]) (*cp.* Matt. xv. 2; Mark vii. 3), as well as the Pentateuch. See further Excursus I, in Taylor's edition. The words "from Sinai" mean, of course, from God on Sinai. **received:** The root קבל is that from which *Kabbalah* comes, *i.e.* the tradition contained in the post-Mosaic Scriptures (see Jastrow, *s.v.*).

² **delivered:** *i.e.* handed down (*tradere*), from the same root as *מסורה* above; *cp.* the "Masoretic" text of the Old Testament, *i.e.* the text which has been handed down; this comes from the same root. *cp.* ἡ παράδοσις τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, Mark vii. 3.

³ **to Joshua:** See Num. xxvii. 18-22; *cp.* Josh. i. 7-9.

⁴ **the Elders:** "And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua" (Josh. xxiv. 31); *cp.* Judges ii. 7.

⁵ **the Prophets:** "Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto you all My servants the prophets" (Jer. vii. 25); *cp.* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16. *AN* adds "Judges" after "Elders," and "Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi" after "the Prophets."

⁶ **the Great Synagogue:** The founding of this is ascribed by Jewish tradition to Ezra; but it is very doubtful whether such an institution, at any rate in the traditional sense, ever existed. This is the earliest mention of it; neither Philo nor Josephus alludes to it. In all probability the account contained in Neh. viii.-x. of the gathering together of all the people to hear the Law expounded is to be regarded as the historical basis on which later the myth of the Great Synagogue was built.

These (men) said¹ three things: "Be deliberate in judgement";² and "Raise up many disciples";³ and "Make a fence⁴ to the Torah."

2. (2) Simeon the Just⁵ belonged to the last (of the members) of the Great Synagogue. He used to say: "On three things⁶ the world stands: on the Torah,⁷ on the (Temple-)service,⁸ and on acts of love."⁹

¹ **These (men) said . . .**: The three things said must not be regarded as having been formally uttered; they probably express three of the most important sayings which had been handed down, and represented precepts regarding which there was a general consensus among the earlier Scribes. The three sayings are doubtless very ancient, for they express what were the most important duties of the Scribes, judging and teaching the Law. Note the threefold sayings both here and in the verses which follow.

² **Be deliberate in judgement**: lit. "be waiting" or "slow"; the reference is to the pronouncing of judicial sentences; like the other two sayings, this is not said to men in general, but it is one of the principles on which the men of the "Great Synagogue" (the imaginary forbear of the Sanhedrin) acted.

³ **Raise up many disciples**: for the purpose of handing down the traditions; "disciples" = *μαθηταί*.

⁴ **a fence**: "Impose additional restrictions so as to keep at a safe distance from forbidden ground" (Taylor).

⁵ **Simeon the Just**: Probably Simeon II., high-priest *circa* B.C. 226-198, is meant; see Sir. I. 1-24. Some authorities think that his grandfather, Simeon I., is meant; he was high-priest about B.C. 300; Josephus (*Antiq.* XII. ii. 4) speaks of him as the "Just" or "Righteous," but the epithet would apply equally to his grandson, judging from the panegyric of Ben-Sira, as "Great among his brethren, and the glory of his people."

⁶ **On three things . . .**: *i.e.* the neglect of these three things would entail the downfall of the world. See verse 18, where the utterance by another Rabbi on the same subject is differently expressed. Strack aptly quotes *Nedarim* 32b (T.B.): "Great is the Torah, for if it were not, Heaven and earth could not exist."

⁷ **the Torah**: with the art. here, and therefore referring to the Pentateuch, probably.

⁸ **the (Temple-)service**: *Abodah*; *AN* specifically mentions the worship of the Temple; the word was only used in reference to prayer after the destruction of the Temple. Here it = *ἡ λατρεία*; *cf.* Rom. ix. 4.

⁹ **acts of love**: These refer to such things as sympathy, forbearance,

3. (3) Antigonos,¹ a man of Socho,² received the tradition³ from Simeon the Just. He used to say: "Be not like⁴ slaves who minister unto (their) lord on condition of receiving a reward; but be like unto slaves who minister unto (their) lord without (expecting) to receive a reward; and let the fear of Heaven⁵ be upon you."
4. (4) Jose ben Joezer of Zeredah⁶ and Jose ben Jochanan⁷ of

mercy, charitableness, etc., as distinct from almsgiving (צדקה = lit. "righteousness"). The three things on which the world stands thus deal with (1) God's relationship with man; (2) man's relationship with God; (3) man's relationship with his fellow-creatures.

¹ **Antigonos**: A Greek name; nothing further is known of him; other Greek names occur in iii. 10 and elsewhere.

² **a man of Socho**: "a man of" (איש) implies that he was a man of distinction. Socho is mentioned as a city in Judæa, Josh. xv. 35; I Sam. xvii. 1.

³ **received the tradition**: See above under verse 1, and *cp.* Sir. viii. 9: "Reject not the tradition of the aged, which they heard from their fathers."

⁴ **Be not like . . .**: *cp.* Luke xvii. 7-10.

⁵ **the fear of Heaven**: *i.e.* of God; with this avoidance of the direct mention of God *cp.* the frequent phrase in the Gospels "kingdom of Heaven."

⁶ **Jose . . . Zeredah**: Jose is an abbreviation of Joseph; he lived about 140 B.C. Zeredah is probably to be identified with Zarethan in Ephraim, in the hill-country above the Jordan valley; see I Kings xi. 26; 2 Chron. iv. 17.

⁷ In verses 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 two of the Fathers are always mentioned together; these are called *Zugôth* ("pairs"), a name given to the chief exponents of the Law prior to the time of the *Tannaim* (*i.e.* "Teachers"), whose period was from A.D. 10-220. These ten teachers all lived, therefore, in pre-Christian times. According to tradition, the *Zugôth* always stood at the head of the Sanhedrin, the first-named having been the President, or *Nasi* ("Prince"), the other the Vice-President, or *Ab Beth-Din* ("Father of the Court"); this is stated in the tractate *Chagigah* ii. 2 (הראשונים היו נשיאים ושנים להם אבות בית דין). This, however, cannot be regarded as historical, for the evidence both of Josephus and of the New Testament points to the high-priest as the head of the Sanhedrin; see *Antiq.* xx. x. 1 (end): ". . . and the high-priests were entrusted with a dominion over the nation"; *cp.* also *Contra Apion.* ii. 23 (beginning), and Matt. xxvi. 3, 57; John xviii. 12 ff.;

Jerusalem received (the Torah) from them.¹ Jose ben Joezer of Zeredah said: "Let thy house be a meeting-place for the wise;² and bedust thyself with the dust of their feet;³ and drink in⁴ their words with eagerness."⁵

5. (5) Jose ben Jochanan of Jerusalem said: "Let thy house be opened wide"; and "Let the needy be thy family";⁶ and "Talk not overmuch with women."⁷

Acts v. 17 ff.; vii. 1; ix. 1, 2; xxii. 5; xxiii. 2, 4; xxiv. 1. It is not until post-Mishnic times that we find *Nasi* and *Ab Beth-Din* used in this way; *Nasi* is otherwise always used in reference to a ruling prince or even king; and the very name *Ab Beth-Din* implies, not a subordinate position, but that of head over the "House of the Court," which, as a matter of fact, was the *Sanhedrin*.

¹ **from them**: Another reading, but not so well attested, is "from him," *i.e.* Antigonos, in the preceding verse; but it may be assumed that Antigonos had pupils, to whom the "from them" would refer. This reading implies that "a name or names are missing between Antigonos and the first pair. This favours the authenticity of the list; if it had been fictitious, names would have been supplied" (Herford).

² **the wise**: The wise men, or *ha-Chakamim*; this was the technical term applied to those learned in the Law. As a special class they are mentioned alongside of priests and prophets in Jer. xviii. 18 (*cp.* Matt. xxiii. 34). They are the *σοφοί* of the New Testament; *cp.* Matt. xi. 25; Rom. i. 14; 1 Cor. i. 19, 20.

³ **bedust thyself . . . feet**: Both the teacher (*cp.* Matt. xxvi. 55) and his listeners (*cp.* Luke ii. 46) sat on the ground as a rule; hence the technical word *Yeshibah* (lit. "sitting") given to an academy or house of learning. In Acts xxii. 3 the Apostle says he was brought up "at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers."

⁴ **drink in . . .** *cp.* the Midrash *Sifre* 84a: "As water giveth life to the world, so do the words of the Torah give life to the world"; and *Shir ha-Shirim* i. 2: "As water refresheth the body, so doth the Torah refresh the soul." See also John iv. 14; vii. 38.

⁵ **eagerness**: lit. "thirstiness."

⁶ **thy family**: lit. "the children of thy house"; *cp.* Luke xiv. 12-14.

⁷ **Talk not overmuch**: lit. "Multiply not talk"; in Bibl. Hebr. the word (תַּמְתֵּם) means "meditation" in a good sense, communing with God (Ps. civ. 34); though possibly it is used in the sense of "talk" in 2 Kings ix. 11. In neo-Hebr. the usual meaning is "talk" or "con-

(6) ¹[(Regarding) his own wife, they said ² this; how much more ³ (regarding) his neighbour's wife.]

[Wherefore the wise men said: "Every time a man talks overmuch with women he brings evil upon himself, and he escapes from (studying) the words of Torah, and his end is (that) he inherits Gehinnom."⁴]

6.⁵ (7) Joshua ben Perachiah and Nittai the Arbelite received (the Torah) from them.⁶ Joshua ben Perachiah said: "Get

versation," sometimes in the sense of "whisper"; with this latter *cf.* Is. xxix. 4. **with women**: lit. "with the woman," so that the reference might apply simply to a man's wife so far as the language is concerned. This is, however, improbable, for such a direction would be entirely uncalled for; it is better to regard the definite article as intended to express the generic notion; *cf.* John iv. 27.

¹ The words in square brackets are two marginal notes added by some later hand; they occur, however, in all the MSS., but do not figure in *AN*.

² **they said**: *i.e.* the wise men in general.

³ **how much more**: lit. "light and heavy"; רַבִּיתָּ לֵךְ is a Talmudic phrase for expressing a conclusion *a minori ad majus*; it is equivalent to the Biblical רַבִּי מֵעָלָיו, *e.g.* Prov. xi. 31 "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed on earth; *how much more* (lit. also [it is] that) the wicked and the sinner!" *cf.* πόσῳ μᾶλλον in Matt. x. 25.

⁴ **Every time . . . Gehinnom**: These words, slightly altered, are quoted from Sir. ix. 9 (Hebrew). **he brings**: lit. "he occasions." **inherits**: Another reading is "goes down," which is more usual in this connexion. **Gehinnom**: *cf.* Jos. xv. 8 (גִּינֵי הַיְדֵן); Matt. xxiii. 15 (υἷὸν γέεννης); the opposite of גֶּדֶן, "the Garden of Eden."

⁵ The two teachers mentioned in this verse lived at the end of the second century B.C. In the Talmud (*Sotah* 47a) a pupil of Joshua ben P. is referred to who, in the opinion of some scholars, was believed to be Christ (Krauss, *Das Leben Jesu*, p. 182 [1902]). Nittai (another reading is Matthai) is an abbreviated form of Nethaniah (*cf.* Jochai shortened from Jochanan). Arbela (= Beth-Arbel in Hos. x. 14) is in Galilee, north-west of Tiberias; see 1 Macc. ix. 1; the modern name is Irbid.

⁶ **from them**: *i.e.* the pair of teachers mentioned in the preceding verse.

thee a teacher";¹ and "Get possession of a companion";² and "Judge every man favourably."³

7. (8) Nittai the Arbelite said: "Keep thy distance from an evil neighbour"; and "Associate not with a wicked man"; and "Despair not⁴ of (divine) retribution."

8. (9) Judah ben Tabai⁵ and Simeon ben Shetach⁵ received (the Torah) from them. Judah ben Tabai said: "Be not⁶ as those who⁷ seek to influence the judges; and when

¹ a teacher: lit. "a Rab."

² a companion: *Chabēr*; the word came to be used especially of men of learning as opposed to the unlearned mass, 'am ha-aretz. The Rabbis often urged the advantage of companionship in study; in Eccles. iv. 9 it is said: "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour." See iii. 3 below, and *cp.* Matt. xviii. 20. In *AN* viii. 3 it is said that a man should, if necessary, pay someone so that he may have a companion when studying the Law.

³ Judge every . . . : lit. "according to the scale of virtue"; the picture is that of scales, and the Rabbi teaches that in judging a man it should be done on the assumption that the scale in which his virtue rests is the heavier; *cp.* Matt. v. 7: "Blessed are the merciful."

⁴ Despair not: Perhaps more literally, "Do not give up the thought of." What was evidently in the writer's mind was a warning against some such attitude as that represented in Ps. lxxiii. 12, 13: "Behold, these are the wicked; and being always at ease, they increase in riches. Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart and washed my hands in innocence."

⁵ Tabai: Abbreviated form of Tobiah; little is known of him; he lived in the reign of Alexander Jannæus (B.C. 103-76). Far more important was Simeon b. Shetach, for it was largely owing to him that the Pharisaic party gained permanent ascendancy in the reign of Alexandra (Salome), B.C. 76-67. He is stated to have been the brother of Salome (T.B. *Berakhoth* 48 a); hence his influence at court both during her reign and that of her husband. Two special reforms are connected with the name of Simeon b. Shetach, viz. the restriction of divorces, which had become very common, and the establishment of schools for the education of the young.

⁶ Be not: lit. "Make not thyself."

⁷ as those who . . . : lit. "as those prepare . . ." The reference is to those who sought to bias the judge before the case came into court.

the litigants are standing before thee regard them as guilty;¹ but when they have been dismissed from thy presence regard them as innocent,² since they have received their sentence."³

9. (10) Simeon ben Shetach said: "Examine the witnesses thoroughly;⁴ and be cautious⁵ with thy words lest⁶ from them they learn to bear false witness."⁷
10. (11) Shemaiah⁸ and Abtalion received (the Law) from them. Shemaiah said: "Love labour";⁹ and "Hate domineer-

¹ **guilty**: lit. "wicked," which of course comes to the same thing. In Jewish law the litigants were regarded by the judge as guilty until proved innocent. English law, as is well known, is the exact reverse of this.

² **innocent**: When wrong has been atoned for, and the law satisfied, the guilt must be regarded as having been removed.

³ **their sentence**: lit. "judgement upon themselves."

⁴ **Examine . . . thoroughly**: lit. "Be redundant in examining." It is told in the Jerusalem Talmud (*Sanhedrin* vi. 23^b) that a son of Simeon's was once unjustly condemned to die through the inadequate examination of witnesses; he suffered death. Simeon's saying gains in significance in the light of this.

⁵ **cautious**: *cp.* Ezra iv. 22. The word occurs several times in our book, *e.g.* ii. 10, 13.

⁶ **lest**: נִשְׁפָּז, formed from שֵׁפ and נִשְׁפָּ (= נִשְׁפָּ); *cp.* i. 11. The meaning of the saying is that if a judge speaks too freely during a trial he may reveal his own opinion on questions at issue, in which case the witnesses might be tempted to frame their answers in accordance with this.

⁷ **to bear false witness**: lit. "to lie"; but the word is often used in connexion with bearing false witness.

⁸ **Shemaiah**: According to Josephus (*Antiq.* xv. i. 1) the pupil of Abtalion; these two are probably the Σαμέας and Πολλίων mentioned by him (see also xv. x. 4). They both lived in the latter half of the first century B.C.

⁹ **Love labour**: *i.e.* a trade; *cp.* T.B. *Kiddushin* 29a: "He who does not teach his son a handiwork is as though he taught him theft." On the subject of the Rabbinical teaching on the need of labour see Franz Delitzsch, *Jewish Artisan Life in the Time of Christ* (1902). For the New Testament teaching see Acts xviii. 3; xx. 34; 1 Cor. iv. 12; Eph. iv. 28; 1 Thess. ii. 19; 2 Thess. iii. 8.

ing";¹ and "Make not thyself known² to those in authority."³

11.⁴ (12) Abtalion said: "Ye wise men, be cautious in your words, lest ye be guilty of the sin⁵ (which will bring about) exile, and ye be exiled⁶ to a place of evil waters,⁷ and the

¹ **Hate domineering**: Perhaps better "arrogance." The word *rabbānuth* is used in three senses in Rabbinical writings: (1) of the powers that be, as, e.g., in the T.B. *Pesachim* 87b: "Woe to the (royal) authority (*rabbānuth*), for it buries its holders, and there is not one prophet that did not outlive four kings"; (2) in the more general sense of "superiority" or "arrogance"; (3) for expressing the status of a Rabbi (*cp.* Matt. xxiii. 8); this usage of the word is later. It is in the sense of the second of these that the word is here used; *cp.* Rom. xii. 16: "Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits."

² **Make not thyself known . . .**: The form of the word here (*hith-pael*) has the sense of forcing oneself upon the notice of someone; *cp.* Prov. xxv. 6: "Put not thyself forward in the presence of the king"; *cp.* Sir. vii. 5, 6. The words are, in effect, an exhortation to be humble-minded.

³ **authority**: רִשְׁוֹת, from the root רִשָּׁה, connected with ראש "head"; see further the note on iii. 22.

⁴ The meaning of this verse is as follows: If the wise men (*Chakamin*), who are the responsible teachers of the people, are not careful in their teaching, they will be in danger of the sin of heretical teaching; the punishment for this is exile; and exile is no place for the pure teaching of the Law, but one of evil waters, i.e. heretical teaching; but worse than this, if the disciples imbibe heretical teaching, it will mean for them spiritual death; and it will then be seen that God has been dishonoured.

⁵ **sin**: חֹבְלָה (from the same root as the word translated "guilty" above) means lit. "debt" (*cp.* ὀφείλημα in the Lord's Prayer, Matt. vi. 9).

⁶ **ye be exiled**: Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* 1. v. 2), in speaking of the power of the Pharisees during the reign of Alexandra, says: ". . . they banished and recalled whom they pleased; they bound and loosed at their pleasure."

⁷ **evil waters**: מֵי הָרַעִים; this omission of the article before the noun is frequent in the Mishnah. For this figurative meaning of water *cp.* T.B. *Chagigah* 3a: "we drink thy water," i.e. "we assimilate thy teaching." *cp.* John iv. 14; vii. 37; 1 Cor. iii. 6,

disciples¹ that come after you drink and die,² and it be found that the name of Heaven³ has been profaned."

12. (13) Hillel and Shammai⁴ received (the Law) from them. Hillel said: "Be of the disciples of Aaron,⁵ loving peace and⁶

¹ **the disciples . . .**: In T.B. *Makkoth* 10a it is said that when a teacher is sent into exile his disciples have to go with him.

² **die**: For the thought *cp.* Rom. vii. 9, 10.

³ **Heaven**: *i.e.* God; *cp.* "kingdom of Heaven"; see also Rom. ii. 24. The last sentence of this verse, "and it be found . . .," does not occur in *AN*.

⁴ The period of Hillel's activity was during the reign of Herod the Great and after, roughly from B.C. 30–A.D. 10; the date of his death is not known. He was known as Hillel *ha-Zākēn*, "the Elder," and was also called "the Babylonian," as he was a Babylonian by birth. It has been held that he was Christ's teacher, but no definite proof of this exists. On the other hand, that he must have been one of the "doctors" (teachers) in the Temple (Luke ii. 46) scarcely admits of doubt. "In the memory of posterity Hillel lived, on the one hand, as the scholar who made the whole contents of the traditional law his own (*Soferim* xvi. 9), who, in opposition to his colleague, Shammai, generally advocated milder interpretations of the Halakah, and whose disciples as a 'house'—that is, as 'Hillel's school'—stood in like opposition to Shammai's disciples. On the other hand, he was known as the saint and the sage who, in his private life and in his dealings with men, practised the high virtues of morality and resignation, just as he taught them in his maxims with unexcelled brevity and earnestness" (Bacher, in *JE* vi. 397*b*). Shammai, Hillel's contemporary, was also called *ha-Zākēn*; he was a native of Palestine. Various sayings and acts of his are recorded showing his extreme strictness in the observance of the Law. The controversies between the "houses" of Hillel and Shammai continued for nearly a century.

⁵ **Be of . . . Aaron**: The unclassical construction should be noticed, as it often occurs in the Mishnah. בְּיַתְּמִידָיו שֶׁל אַהֲרֹן, *i.e.* the genitive is not expressed by the construct state, but by שֶׁל preceded by a possessive pronoun; see the same thing in ii. 2: רִבֵּן בְּמִיּוֹלָל בְּנֵי שְׁלִירָבִי.

⁶ **loving peace and . . .**: *cp.* Rom. xiv. 19; Heb. xii. 14; and especially 1 Pet. iii. 11 in the quotation from Ps. xxxiv. 12 ff.; see also Matt. v. 9. The mention of peace in connexion with Aaron often occurs in Rabbinical writings, *e.g.* in *AN* xii. it is said that Aaron went about as a peacemaker,

following after peace, loving men¹ and bringing them nigh² unto the Law.”

13.³ (14) He used to say: “He that exalts⁴ his name destroys his name; he who increases not⁵ decreases”;⁶ and “He who learns not⁷ deserves death”;⁸ and “He who makes gain⁹ out of the Crown¹⁰ shall perish.”

¹ **men**: בְּרִיָּה, lit. “creation,” “formation,” from the root ברא; *cp.* the phrase וְעוֹלָם בְּרִיָּהוּ, “the creation of the world” (*Bereshith Rabba* § vii. end); equivalent to κρίσις; *cp.* Mark xvi. 15: κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάση τῇ κτίσει; see also Rom. i. 25; viii. 19; Col. i. 15. In these and other N.T. passages the word is in the sing., while the Hebr. before is plur., but it is usually found in the sing. in Rabbinical literature; see Jastrow, *s.v.* It includes humanity as a whole, which is important from the words which follow.

² **bringing them nigh** . . . : Hillel here contemplates the conversion of Gentiles to Judaism. “The Jewish propaganda throughout the Empire was primarily the proclamation of the one and only God, of His moral Law, and of His judgement; to this everything else became secondary. The object in many cases might be pure proselytism (Matt. xxiii. 15), but Judaism was quite in earnest in overthrowing dumb idols and inducing pagans to recognise their Creator and Judge, for in this the honour of the God of Israel was concerned” (Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, i. 10 [1908]).

³ This verse is in Aramaic.

⁴ **He that exalts** . . . : lit. “He that stretches out a name destroys a name”; the thought is parallel to Matt. xxiii. 12: “Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled”; *cp.* Prov. xxix. 23; Is. ii. 17. This meaning of the word נגד is rare; its ordinary use is in reference to *things* being stretched out or prolonged.

⁵ **he who increases not** . . . : *i.e.* he who does not increase in knowledge loses knowledge; one cannot remain stationary here. In the Aramaic there is a word-play: מוֹסִיף יוֹסֵף (*mōsif yesūf*); *cp.* Matt. xiii. 12.

⁶ **decreases**: lit. “ceases,” in the sense of coming to an end, *i.e.* even the knowledge hitherto gained will disappear.

⁷ **learns not**: The word יָלַד means lit. “to get accustomed” to something by use; hence, by going over a thing again and again, to learn.

⁸ **deserves death**: lit. “worthy of death” = ἐνοχος θανάτου, Matt. xxvi. 66.

⁹ **He who makes gain**: lit. “He who serves himself.”

¹⁰ **the Crown**: *i.e.* the Law; *cp.* iv. 17: “the crown of the Torah.”

- 14.¹ (15) He used to say: "If I am not for myself, who is for me? And if I am for myself (only),² what am I? And if not now, when?"
15. (16) Shammai³ said: "Make⁴ thy (study of the) Torah a fixed habit"; "Say little and do much"; and "Receive every man with a pleasant face."⁵
- 16.⁶ (17) Rabban⁷ Gamliel said: "Get⁸ thee a teacher"; and

The passage means that the teaching of the Law must be done for the love of it, and not for payment; *cp.* 1 Cor. ix. 18, and see also Is. lv. 1-3; James i. 12: "the crown of life," for the Torah gives life (vi. 7).

¹ This verse is in Hebrew again. The sentences are very pregnant and somewhat difficult, but the meaning is: If I do not look after myself, who else will? Yet, if I only look after myself, what am I but a contemptible creature! I must look after others, too; and I must do this now, or the opportunity will go for ever. The saying offers a good example of the sense of proportion so often to be found in the teaching of the ancient Rabbis.

² **if I am for myself (only)** . . . : *cp.* Sir. xxxi. 15: "Honour thy neighbour as thyself"; Matt. vii. 12.

³ **Shammai**: Abbreviated from Shemaiah. Whenever he or his "house" is mentioned in Rabbinical writings it is, as a rule, to note his teaching as opposed to that of Hillel or his "house."

⁴ **Make** . . . : So necessary was the habit of a regular fixed time for the study of the Law every day held to be that it was believed that God Himself set the example, *e.g.* in T.B. *Abodah Zara 3 b* it is said: "There are twelve hours in the day; during the first three the Holy One sits down and occupies Himself with the Torah"; much the same is said in the Jerusalem Targum to Deut. xxxii. 4 and in the Midrash *Bereshith Rabba* xlix.

⁵ **with a pleasant face**: lit. "with the look of a pleasant face."

⁶ See Note at end of Chapter I., p. 14.

⁷ **Rabban**: This form of the title ("our master") is of greater honour than Rabbi ("my master"), and Rabbi is a more honorific title than Rab ("master"); but, as it is said, the greatest honour of all is to have a name without any title at all.

⁸ **Get** . . . : The identical saying is recorded of Joshua ben Perachiah in verse 6.

“Put far from thee doubt”;¹ and “Be not constantly² tithing by guesswork.”³

17. (18) Simeon, his son,⁴ said: “All my days have I grown up

¹ **Put far from thee doubt**: lit. “Remove thyself from doubt.” Taylor explains this as meaning that whatever doubts a man may have they should be resolved by authority, not merely upon his own judgement, taking the words in close connexion with the preceding phrase; but the word for “doubt,” דַּבָּד, seems generally to refer to doubts regarding legal requirements; it is used, e.g., of a doubt as to whether a man has eaten forbidden fat or not, as to whether it was the legal quantity, as to whether a man had committed a sin requiring a sacrifice, etc. (see Jastrow, *s.v.*); the meaning of the phrase would, therefore, rather seem to be that a man should not be hypersensitive and worry his head about legal *minutiæ*; it is in opposition to the attitude described in Matt. xxiii. 16–26, and admirably illustrates the point of view of the Hillelite type of Pharisee as opposed to the Shammaite type denounced in the Gospels.

² **Be not constantly** . . .: lit. “Tithe not much by estimation”; the meaning is that if a man merely makes an estimate, instead of an exact measurement, of whatever it may be that he gives the tithe, he is apt to estimate it in his own favour; as Taylor well puts it: “Leave as little scope as possible for personal bias and the temptations of self-interest.” *cp.* the saying: “He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much” (Luke xvi. 10).

³ **by guesswork**: reading אֲמִדָּה, adverb, lit. “by guesswork”; others point אֲמִדָּה (“estimates”) as plur. of אֲמִדָּה; the former is preferable. The root אֲמִדָּה means “to conjecture.”

⁴ **Simeon, his son**: The obvious thing is to take this Simeon as being the son of Gamliel; but Herford, in an interesting note, takes another view, which is possibly the right one. He says: “A much more probable explanation is that verses 16, 17 have been transposed, and that the Simeon of verse 17 is the son of Hillel and father of Gamaliel. In favour of this view is the fact that this Simeon is not called Rabban, as he would have been if he had succeeded Gamaliel. Also, that Simeon the son of Hillel was so unimportant that he is only once mentioned in the Talmud; this is in keeping with the saying mentioned in verse 17, which is the utterance of a shy, retiring man. Also, in verse 18, there is Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel, *i.e.* the man to whom verse 17 is commonly supposed to refer, *viz.* the Simeon who was one of the leading men during the siege of Jerusalem (Josephus,

amongst the wise,¹ and I have not found aught good for man² but silence";³ and "Not the study⁴ (of the Law), but the carrying-out (of it) is the essential thing";⁵ and "Whoso multiplies words occasions⁶ sin."

18. (19) Rabban Simeon⁷ ben Gamliel said: "On three things doth the world stand:⁸ on judgement,⁹ on truth, and on peace."

Bell. Jud. iv. iii. 9). The commentators, however, having already assigned verse 17 to him, are obliged to assign verse 18 to a younger Simeon b. Gamaliel, in the middle of the second century, who is here quite out of place. The identification I propose makes the arrangement simple and natural; it brings the line of Hillel down to the year of the siege, and stops there, in accordance with the remark in the Talmud (*T.B. Shabbath* 15a), that the order of succession was: Hillel, Simeon, Gamaliel, Simeon; of whom it is said that the four held office for a hundred years prior to the destruction of the Temple." See the table of the descent from Hillel on p. 14. The fact that by transposing verses 16, 17 the words "Simeon, his son" seem to make him the son of Shammai need not cause difficulty; for, although this group of verses begins (verse 12) "Hillel and Shammai," it is quite obvious that Hillel is the foremost personality, and it is his genealogy which is given.

¹ **the wise**: Again the *Chakamim*.

² **man**: The word here used, גוף (*guf*), means, in this connexion, "body," "person," or "self" (*cp.* iv. 6); therefore the rendering "man" is justified; but elsewhere in Rabbinical writings it is used in various and very different meanings, *e.g.* of personal duty, of the essence, or integral part, of a thing; it also has the special and peculiar meaning of a supposed storehouse of souls in Heaven, the "*Guf*."

³ . . . **silence**: *cp.* iii. 13; *Prov.* xvii. 28; *Sir.* v. 11, 13; xvii. 28; xviii. 19; xx. 5-8; *James* i. 19.

⁴ **Not the study . . .**: *cp.* *James* i. 22ff. The word for "study" is *midrash*; *cp.* *Beth ha-Midrash*, "House of Study" (*i.e.* of the Law), in v. 14.

⁵ **the essential thing**: lit. "root" (*ikkar*), then what is essential; *cp.* the Thirteen Principles (*Ikkarim*) of the Faith, of Maimonides.

⁶ **occasions**: lit. "causes to come"; *cp.* *Prov.* x. 19; *James* iii. 5 ff.

⁷ **Rabban Simeon**: See note on verse 17.

⁸ **doth the world stand**: The word עמד means "enduring"; another reading is עומד ("standing," usually in the more material sense), but this reading is not well attested.

⁹ **judgement**: דין (*din*) has a various use; here it means "justice,"

[As it is said:¹ "Truth and judgement of peace judge ye in your gates."]

NOTE ON I. 16-II. 4.

The passage i. 16-ii. 4 evidently did not belong to the original form of our book, for while verses 12-15 deal with the sayings of Hillel and Shammai, which are taken up again in ii. 5, the intervening passage speaks of teachers who lived during the period from the beginning of the Christian era right up to the latter half of the third century. The intention of the redactor was evidently to continue the line of Hillel's descendants, though he only mentions the four most important. It is difficult to say whether, in the verse before us, the Gamliel mentioned is the first or second of the name; the authorities differ. The following table of Hillel's descendants will show that it is not easy to decide the question:—

Hillel; main activity B.C. 30-A.D. 10.

Simeon I., his son.

Gamliel I., his grandson; first half of first century.

Simeon II., son of Gamliel I.; main activity 50-70.

Gamliel II., son of Simeon II.; main activity 90-110.

Simeon III., son of Gamliel II.

Judah ha-Nasi, son of Simeon III.; died 220 (*circa*).

Gamliel III., son of Judah ha-Nasi; died 250 (*circa*).

We are inclined to regard the Gamliel mentioned in the verse before us as the *first* of the name; and for this reason, that after the sayings of Hillel (taken up again in ii. 5) are completed in ii. 8, the next teacher to be mentioned is Jochanan ben Zakkai, whose main activity was during the second half of the first century, *i.e.* chronologically he should come after the Simeon mentioned in i. 18, 19 (see further the note on verse 17). It seems more likely, therefore, that the Gamliel mentioned *before* Jochanan ben Zakkai should be the first rather than the second of the name. If this is so, then the Gamliel (the spelling Gamaliel comes from the Greek form) here mentioned is the one spoken of in Acts v. 34 as "a doctor of the law, had in honour of all

the right result of judgement; in the O.T. it is synonymous with מִשְׁפָּט (*mishpat*).

¹ **As it is said . . .**: A redactor's addition, omitted in some MSS. מִשְׁפָּט ("as it is said") is one of the regular formulas in Rabbinical writings for introducing quotations from the O.T. The quotation here is from Zech. viii. 16.

the people," at whose feet St. Paul was "instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers" (Acts xxii. 3). The way in which he is here spoken of fully accords with all that is told of him in Rabbinical literature; he is said to have done more than any other in establishing and upholding the honour in which the "house of Hillel" was held. He was the first to have the honorific title "Rabban" prefixed to his name, and was also, like Hillel, called *ha-Zākēn*.

CHAPTER II

- I. RABBI¹ said: "Which is the right way² that a man should choose out³ for himself? (He should choose out) all that is an honour to him who does it,⁴ and that (brings)⁵ him honour from men"; and "Be careful in (the observance of) a precept⁶ of minor importance⁷ as with

¹ **Rabbi**: While every recognised teacher had the title "Rabbi" prefixed to his name, "Rabbi" pure and simple, as though a proper name, was accorded to Judah ha-Nasi ("the Prince"). He was also called *ha-Kadōsh*, "the holy." He was born *circa* 140 A.D., and died in 219 or 220. He is celebrated as the chief redactor of the Mishnah, though since his day further additions have been made, as, *e.g.*, the sayings in this verse.

² **the right way**: *ישׁר* means also "straight," and it is used of a believer who is "firm" in his faith (*Midrash Tehillim* to Ps. xi. 7). For the thought of the "way" in the sense of manner of life, *cf.* Acts xviii. 26; xix. 9, 23; xxiv. 14; see also Matt. vii. 13, 14.

³ **choose out**: *בחר* = *eligere*.

⁴ **All that is . . . does it**: The "it" refers to "way"; but the phrase *עשה דרך* ("to do a way") is very unusual. Isaac Bar Shelomoh, the author of a commentary on *Pirke Aboth*, suggests the emendation *לעושרו*, "to his Maker" (Taylor); so, too, Rabbi Israel of Toledo (Herford). The suggestion is attractive, but it does not altogether fall in with the spirit of the verse. Moreover, it is not as though the actual phrase *עשה דרך* occurs; and *עשה* is used in a very wide way.

⁵ **and that (brings) . . .**: lit. "and honour to him from men"; *cf.* Phil. iv. 8.

⁶ **precept**: *מצוה* (*mitzvah*), the regular word for "legal precept."

⁷ **of minor importance**: lit. "light."

(one that is) weighty, for thou knowest not¹ (concerning) the giving of rewards for precepts"; and "Reckon the loss (involved in the fulfilling) of a precept against its reward, and the advantage² (gained by the committing) of a sin against its penalty";³ and "Keep in mind three things, and thou wilt not come into the power of sin";⁴ know what (there is)⁵ above thee: a seeing eye,⁶ and a hearing ear, and all thy works written in a book."⁷

2. Rabban Gamliel,⁸ the son of Rabbi⁹ Judah ha-Nasi, said: "Excellent¹⁰ is Torah-study together with (some) worldly occupation,¹¹ for the labour¹² in both of them causes

¹ **for thou knowest not . . .**: *i.e.* thou knowest not how great the reward may be for the fulfilling of any given precept; *cf.* Matt. v. 19.

² **advantage**: lit. "reward"; the same word in Hebr. as that just used.

³ **penalty**: lit. "loss"; again the same word in Hebr. as that just used; but in both these cases the sense is brought out more clearly in English by using different words.

⁴ **Keep in mind . . . of sin**: The same words as in iii. 1. **into the power of sin**: lit. "into the hands of sin," לְיַד עֲבֵרָה; for this use *cf.* Ps. cxli. 9. . . . שְׁמִרְתִּי מִיַּד פָּח, "Keep me from the hands of the snare. . ."

⁵ **know what (there is)**: In one MS. "what" is omitted in order to make clearer what the "three things" are, otherwise the words "know what (there is) above thee" would read like the first of them; this certainly makes the text run smoother.

⁶ **a seeing eye . . .**: *cf.* Ps. xxxiii. 13-15; xxxiv. 15, 16 (Hebr. 16, 17); 1 Pet. iii. 12.

⁷ **written in a book**: *cf.* Mal. iii. 16; Dan. vii. 10; Rev. xx. 12.

⁸ **Rabban Gamliel**: *i.e.* Gamliel III.; see the table on p. 14; scarcely anything is known of him beyond one or two notices of him in the Tosephta and Boraitha.

⁹ **the son of Rabbi**: For the construction see note 5, p. 9.

¹⁰ **excellent**: lit. "comely."

¹¹ **worldly occupation**: lit. "the way of the earth" (דֶּרֶךְ אֲרֶץ); *cf.* iii. 24. The phrase is used in various senses; see Gen. xix. 31; Josh. xxiii. 14; 1 Kings ii. 2; it also means the way of behaviour among one's fellow-creatures; here, as often elsewhere, it means worldly occupation, whether with head or hand, as opposed to strictly religious activity.

¹² **the labour . . .**: *i.e.* when a man is busy with these things temptation keeps from him, and thoughts of sin do not occur.

sin to be forgotten; and all Torah(-study) without (worldly) labour ends in failure,¹ and brings sin (in its train). And let all who labour² with the congregation³ labour with them⁴ for the Name of Heaven;⁵ for the merit of their fathers⁶ sustains them, and their righteousness⁷ stands for ever. And (as for) you,⁸ I will reckon⁹ unto you reward¹⁰ as though ye had done it."

- 3.¹¹ "Be ye cautious regarding those in authority, for they permit not a man to draw nigh unto them but for their own purpose. They appear to be friends when it suits them, but do not help a man in time of his need."

¹ **ends in failure**: lit. "its end is in failure." Contrast with the teaching given in this verse Ben-Sira's ideas on the subject; he sees the need of the craftsman and the labourer, but considers their lot an unhappy one as compared with him who can give his whole time to the study of the Law; see Sir. xxxviii. 24-xxxix. 11.

² **labour**: עמל is often used of labouring at the study of the Law: here, however, it refers to the carrying-out of the affairs of the Synagogue congregation, such as the administration of charity, etc.

³ **the congregation**: צבּוּר (*zibbur*), lit. "a heap"; in later usage the technical term for the Synagogue congregation.

⁴ **with them**: The plur. refers to the members of the congregation.

⁵ **for the Name of Heaven**: It is an exhortation to disinterested work; *cp.* Rom. xv. 7: "... to the glory of God."

⁶ **the merit of their fathers**: The doctrine of *Zecuth Aboth* ("Merit of the Fathers") plays an important part in Jewish theology; it is often emphasised in the Targums as well as in the later literature; *cp.* Rom. xi. 28: "they are beloved for the father's sake." The efficacy of this merit acts upon later generations; see the last sentence of this verse. See further Weber, pp. 292-297.

⁷ **their righteousness**: *i.e.* that of the fathers.

⁸ **(as for) you**: *i.e.* "all who labour for the congregation."

⁹ **I will reckon . . .**: The words are put into the mouth of God; for the thought *cp.* Rom. iv. 3: "... it was reckoned unto him for righteousness."

¹⁰ **reward**: Some MSS. add "plenteous."

¹¹ With this verse *cp.* Ps. cxlvi. 3: "Put not your trust in princes, nor in any son of man, in whom is no help."

4. He used¹ to say: "Do His will² as (if it were) thy will, that He may do thy will as (if it were) His will. Annihilate³ thy will before His will, that He may annihilate the will of others⁴ before thy will."
5. Hillel⁵ said: "Separate thyself not⁶ from the congregation, and trust not thyself⁷ until the day of thy death"; and "Judge not⁸ thy neighbour until thou comest into his place"; and "Say not (that) a thing which cannot be understood⁹ (at first) will be understood (eventually)";

¹ **He used** . . . : *i.e.* Rabban Gamliel III.

² **His will** : *i.e.* God's will. With the general thought of the sentence *cf.* Matt. xii. 50; John vii. 7.

³ **annihilate** : The root הוּא means lit. "to be hollow," "void."

⁴ **the will of others** : *i.e.* of adversaries.

⁵ **Hillel** : In all probability the great Hillel is meant (i. 12), as with verse 5 the sequence is taken up again which was broken by the insertion of i. 16-ii 4.

⁶ **Separate thyself not** . . . : An exhortation similar to that which occurs in Hebr. x. 25; "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is." Evidence is not wanting, however, of the existence of unorthodox gatherings.

⁷ **trust not thyself** . . . : lit. "believe not in thyself"; man requires the help that is afforded by the sense of corporate unity; *cf.* I Cor. ix. 27; x. 12. According to Jewish teaching, death effected an atonement for all sin; *cf.* the words in the Jewish Liturgy at the "Confession on a Death-bed": "O may my death be an atonement for all my sins, iniquities, and transgressions of which I have been guilty against Thee."

⁸ **Judge not** . . . : *i.e.* until thou art placed in a similar temptation; *cf.* Matt. vii. 1-5.

⁹ **which cannot be understood** : lit. "which cannot be heard"; the saying is ambiguous, but the meaning probably is that when a teacher puts forth some *dictum* he should not put it in an enigmatical form and then say that, although it cannot be understood at once, its meaning will become clear later when fully pondered; in other words, a teacher should make his teaching clear from the outset. The warning was thoroughly *à propos* when one remembers the paradoxical form of so many Rabbinical utterances. There is a variant reading which omits the negative, *viz.* "which can be understood"; but there is little doubt about the reading adopted above being the correct one.

and "Say not, 'When I have leisure¹ I will study';² it may be that thou wilt have no leisure."

6. He used to say: "An empty-headed³ man fears not sin; nor is a 'vulgar person' pious;⁴ nor can a shy man learn;⁵ nor can a passionate man teach;⁶ nor can he who is much⁷ occupied in business become wise"; and "Wheresoever⁸ there are no men strive to be a man."
7. Moreover,⁹ he saw a skull¹⁰ floating¹¹ on the face of the

¹ **When I have leisure**: Note the heaping-up of particles (לְשִׁמְךָ); the verb נִתְּנָה means lit. "to turn oneself away," viz. from other occupations.

² **I will study**: The root שָׁנָה means lit. "to repeat"; by repeating a thing one learns it; and so the word came to mean "to learn" as well as "to teach," specifically in regard to the Law. "Mishnah" comes from the same root.

³ **empty-headed**: "boorish," "uncultivated"; the root בָּוֵר means "to be empty."

⁴ **nor is a "vulgar person" pious**: עַמְהָרָץ ('*am ha-aretz*) and חַסִּיד (*Chasid*) are both technical terms in Rabbinical literature; the former, used both collectively and individually, means lit. "people of the land," and is usually held to mean "unlearned in the Law" (see, however, the present writer's *The Books of the Apocrypha*, p. 92 f., where both these terms are discussed); cp. John vii. 49. The *Chasidim* are the "pious ones," or "saints" as they are called in the Psalms.

⁵ **nor can a shy man learn**: lit. "does"; because he is afraid to ask questions of his teacher; the word for "shy" or "bashful" (בִּיָּשָׁן, from the root בָּוֵר) is generally used in a good sense, "chaste," e.g. T.B. *Nedarim* 20 a: "It is a favourable indication in a man that he is bashful" (Jastrow, s.v.).

⁶ **nor can a passionate man . . .**: because he is lacking in patience.

⁷ **nor can he who is much . . .**: lit. "nor he that multiplies . . ."; see the note on ii. 2 and the reference to Sir. there given.

⁸ **Wheresoever**: lit. "in the place where."

⁹ **Moreover . . .**: The saying in this verse, which is partly in Aramaic, is found after another saying of Hillel's in T.B. *Sukka* 53 a (Strack).

¹⁰ **skull**: Hebr. גִּלְגָּל (gūlgōleth); cp. Matt. xxvii. 33; lit. something folded or rolled up (cp. John xx. 7); the place-name Gilgal (= a circle of stones) comes from the same root. The word could also be translated "head."

¹¹ **floating**: lit. "swimming."

waters, and he said unto it: "Because they drowned thee thou art drowned, but they that drowned thee shall (themselves) be drowned at the last."¹

8. He used to say: "The more² flesh the more worms,³ the more treasures the more care, the more maidservants the more lewdness, the more menservants the more theft, the more women the more witchcrafts,⁴ the more Torah the more life,⁵ the more wisdom the more academies of learning,⁶ the more righteousness⁷ the more peace." "He who hath gained a good name⁸ hath gained (something) for himself." "He who hath gained words of Torah for himself hath gained for himself life in the world to come."⁹

9. Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai¹⁰ received (the Law) from Hillel

¹ **Because . . .**: This is not a direct translation, but presumably represents what the original intends; lit. it runs: "Because thou art drowned they drowned thee . . ." The saying expresses the idea of retributive justice: *cp.* *Sota* i. 7. "With the measure wherewith a man measures shall he be measured" (Strack), and see *Matt.* vii. 2; xviii. 23-35.

² **The more**: lit. "He that increaseth"; and so each time in this verse.

³ **worms**: *cp.* *iv.* 4: "The expectation of man is worms."

⁴ **. . . the more witchcrafts**: The same is said in T.B. *Sanhedrin* 67 *a* (Hoffmann).

⁵ **life**: *i.e.* eternal life; *cp.* the words from the Midrash *Sifre* 84 *a* already quoted in the notes to i. 4.

⁶ **academies of learning**: "Yeshibah," lit. "sitting," one of the technical terms for a place where the pursuit of wisdom is fostered; *cp.* *Sir.* li. 29 (Hebr.).

⁷ **righteousness**: *צדקה* in neo-Hebr. = "almsgiving"; *cp.* *Is.* xxxii. 17; *Matt.* vi. 1-4. In three MSS. "the more righteousness the more peace" is preceded by "the more counsel the more discernment."

⁸ **a good name**: *cp.* *Eccles.* vii. 1; *Sir.* xli. 11-13 (Hebr.), esp. the last verse.

⁹ **the world to come**: *העולם הבא* (*ha-'Olam ha-ba*) in contrast to *העולם הזה* (*ha-'Olam ha-zeh*), "this world" or "age"; *cp.* *Eph.* i. 21 (*ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος*, and *ὁ αἰὼν ὁ μέλλων*); *Mark* x. 30; *Luke* xviii. 30. Notice again the emphasis laid on the connexion between the Law and eternal life.

¹⁰ **R. Jochanan b. Zakkai**: Like *Ζακχαῖος*, abbrev. from Zechariah; he worked during the last quarter of the first century A.D., especially

and from Shammai.¹ He used to say: "If thou hast practised much Torah² claim not merit for thyself,³ since for this purpose thou wast created."

10. Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai had five pupils,⁴ and these⁵ were they: Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanos,⁶ and Rabbi Joshua ben Chananiah,⁷ and Rabbi Jose the priest,⁸

in Jabneh (Jamnia), where he founded an academy soon after the fall of Jerusalem. Here he gathered together the remnants of Israel's teachers who continued the study of the Law, so that had it not been for his action it is probable that Judaism would have sunk in oblivion. As a contemporary both of Christ and St. Paul he is a man of considerable interest. He was famed for his great piety and his rigid adherence to the precepts of the Law.

¹ **from Hillel and from Shammai**: *cf.* i. 12 and ii. 4.

² **practised much Torah**: This is the best reading, although the verb *עשה* is not used with Torah as a rule (either with "the things of the Law," or with *mitzvah*, "commandment"), but *cf.* Josh. xxii. 5; Neh. ix. 34 (Strack); Sir. xix. 20. Other readings are "למדוה" *ה*, "learned much Torah," and *עשהו טובה*, "practised much good." Both these may be rejected.

³ **claim not merit for thyself**: lit. "grasp not good for thyself." For the general teaching of the words, *cf.* Matt. xix. 27 and the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, xx. 1-16; Luke xvii. 10; 1 Cor. iv. 7; ix. 16.

⁴ **Rabban Jochanan . . .**: lit. "Five pupils there were to him to Rabban . . ." This reduplication "to him" (*לו*) is omitted by two MSS., but the construction occurs elsewhere, *e.g.* in verse 3.

⁵ **these**: The form here is *אֵלֵּי*, also written *אֵלֵּי* (= the Biblical *אֵלֵּי*); it is also, though rarely, used interrogatively, "which?" R. Jochanan had, of course, many more than five pupils, but those here mentioned were the most prominent.

⁶ **R. Eliezer b. H.**: Died at the beginning of the second century; one of the most prominent of the later teachers, but, narrow and obstinate, he held strongly to the rigid observance of the traditional Law, of which his knowledge was immense; see T.B. *Sanhedrin* 68a (Hoffmann).

⁷ **R. Joshua b. C.**: Together with R. Eliezer, the most celebrated of Jochanan's pupils; he died soon after 130 A.D.; a Levite, of gentle disposition, of whom it is said that when he died there was no more gentle-heartedness in the world; Mishnah, *Sota* ix. 15 (Schürer).

⁸ **R. Jose the priest**: An example of one of the priestly party belonging to the Pharisees; as a rule there was antagonism between the aristocratic priesthood and the Pharisees,

and Rabbi Simeon ben Nathanael,¹ and Rabbi Eleazar ben Arak.² He used to recount their praise³ (thus): "Eliezer ben Hyrcanos⁴ is a plastered cistern⁵ which loseth not a drop. Joshua ben Chananiah—blessed is she⁶ who bore him! Jose the priest is a Chasid.⁷ Simeon ben Nathanael is one that feareth sin. Eleazar ben Arak is an ever-welling spring."⁸

11. He used to say: "If all the wise men of Israel were in the scale of a balance, and Eliezer ben Hyrcanos in the other scale, he would weigh⁹ them all down."

¹⁰[Abba Shaul said in his name: ¹¹"If all the wise

¹ **R. Simeon b. N.:** Nothing is known of him save what is mentioned below, verses 12, 17.

² **R. Eleazar b. A.:** From all accounts a man of great learning; in the Jer. Talm. *Chagigah* ii. 77a, it is said: "Happy art thou, O father Abraham, from whose loins sprang Eleazar ben Arak" (quoted by Mendelsohn in *JE* v. 97a).

³ **praise:** The word (תְּהִלָּה) means also "superiority," and probably this idea underlies the use of it here, since these five were the outstanding among Jochanan's pupils.

⁴ **Eliezer b. H.:** Two MSS. insert "Rabbi"; but in view of its absence before the other names it should evidently be omitted here.

⁵ **a plastered cistern:** lit. "a cistern of lime"; the same word was used of the plaster, almost as white as snow, of the Temple walls (Jastrow).

⁶ **blessed is she . . .:** As in Ps. i. 1, אֲשֶׁר; *cp.* Luke xi. 27.

⁷ **Chasid:** See note on verse 6.

⁸ **an ever-welling spring:** The form of the word (hithp.) gives the idea of continuously growing force. In Prov. xviii. 4 it is said: "The wellspring of wisdom is a flowing brook."

⁹ **he would weigh:** *cp.* vi. 6; the word is also used of good deeds overbalancing evil ones.

¹⁰ **Abba Shaul . . . them all down:** This sentence, which purports to be an expression of opinion differing from that of Jochanan, is a later insertion. It is, however, possible that it is a correction of the preceding sentence which had been erroneously handed down; for in *AN* xxix. this passage runs: "Abba Shaul said in the name of Rabbi Akiba, who said it in the name of R. Jochanan . . ."; a reference to what R. Jochanan says about Eleazar ben Arak in verses 12, 13 points to this latter having been considered the greatest of his pupils.

¹¹ **in his name:** The usual formula whereby a pupil hands down the

men of Israel were in the scale of a balance, and Eliezer ben Hyrcanos with them too,¹ and Eleazar ben Arak in the other scale, he would weigh them all down.”]

12. He said² unto them :³ “Behold, now,⁴ which is the good way to which a man should cleave ?” Rabbi Eliezer said : “A good eye.”⁵ Rabbi Joshua said : “A good companion.”⁶ Rabbi Jose said : “A good neighbour.”⁷ Rabbi Simeon said : “He that seeth⁸ that which shall be.”⁹ Rabbi Eleazar said : “A good heart.”¹⁰ (Then) said he unto them : “To me it appears¹¹ that the words of Eleazar ben Arak are better than your words, for his words include¹² your words.”

utterance of a teacher ; see the words at the end of vi. 6 : “who utters a saying in the name of him who said it . . .”

¹ **and Eliezer . . . too** : These words are probably a gloss added by the redactor of the Mishnah (Hoffmann).

² **He said** : *i.e.* R. Jochanan.

³ **unto them** : *i.e.* his five chief pupils.

⁴ **Behold, now** : lit. “Go and see,” a formula for arousing attention.

⁵ **A good eye** : *cp.* v. 9 ; Prov. xxii. 9 ; Matt. vi. 22, 23. For the converse, “an evil eye” of a grudging, envious man, see Sir. xiv. 8-10 ; *cp.* Mark vii. 22. The replies given are in each case very pregnant, and words have to be supplied mentally ; *e.g.* A good eye is the best means whereby a man is able to continue in the good way.

⁶ **companion** : *chabēr* ; see note on i. 6.

⁷ **neighbour** : This refers to the companion with whom a man associates when among his fellow-creatures generally ; the *chabēr* refers to the companion in Torah-study.

⁸ **He that seeth . . .** : *i.e.* a man of foresight and experience ; these things enable him to keep in the good way.

⁹ **that which shall be** : תהיה, lit. “that shall be born” ; *cp.* Ps. xxii. 32 (Hebr.).

¹⁰ **A good heart** : The heart, being regarded as the seat of the understanding (*cp.* O.T. usage) as well as the *fons et origo* of all action, is, if “good,” rightly looked upon by R. Jochanan as the most important means whereby a man can cleave to the right way.

¹¹ **To me it appears** : lit. “I (emphatic) see.”

¹² **for his words include . . .** : This is a paraphrase ; it is impossible here to render the Hebrew otherwise than by paraphrase.

13. He said unto them: "Behold, now,¹ which is the evil way from which a man should keep himself?" Rabbi Eliezer said: "An evil eye."² Rabbi Joshua said: "An evil companion." Rabbi Jose said: "An evil neighbour." Rabbi Simeon said: "He that borroweth, and repayeth not."

³[One that borroweth from man is as he that borroweth from God⁴—Blessed be He!—since it is said: "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again, but the righteous is merciful and giveth."]

Rabbi Eleazar said: "An evil heart." (Then) said he unto them: "To me it appears⁵ that the words of Eleazar ben Arak are better than your words, for his words include your words."

14. They said⁶ three things. Rabbi Eliezer said: "Let the honour⁷ of thy associate be dear to thee as thine own"; and "Be not easily⁸ provoked, and repent one day⁹

¹ **Behold, now**: See note on preceding verse.

² **An evil eye**: See note on preceding verse, and *cp.* Prov. xxiii. 6; xxviii. 22; Matt. xx. 15; Mark vii. 21, 22.

³ [**One that borroweth . . .**]: This is clearly a later addition; the quotation is from Ps. xxxvii. 21.

⁴ **God**: In the Hebrew *Makōm*, lit. "Place"; *cp.* iii. 3, 10, 14; vi. 1; this substitute for the name of God, which is often found in Rabbinical literature, is used for reverential reasons by avoiding the direct use of the name of God; and also in order to express the truth of the divine ubiquity; God is the "space" or "place" of the world; being infinite, He embraces the universe, but the universe cannot contain Him. In the Midrash *Bereshith Rabba* lxviii. it is said: "Why do they call the Holy One—Blessed be He!—*Makōm*? Because He is the place of the world, and His world is not His place." *cp.* Acts xvii. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 28; Eph. iv. 6, 10.

⁵ **To me it appears . . .**: See notes on preceding verse.

⁶ **They said . . .**: *i.e.* each of the five disciples

⁷ **Let the honour . . .**: *cp.* iv. 12.

⁸ **Be not easily . . .**: *cp.* 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

⁹ **repent one day . . .**: *i.e.* to-day, for death may come any day; this is how R. Eliezer explains the words in T.B. *Shabbath* 153 a (Hoffmann).

before thy death"; and "Warm thyself¹ before the fire of the wise, but beware of their embers, lest thou be burned; for their bite is the bite of a fox, their sting the sting of a scorpion, their hiss the hiss of a serpent; and all their words are like coals of fire."²

15. Rabbi Joshua said:³ "An evil eye,⁴ and the evil tendency,⁵ and hatred of mankind,⁶ drive a man⁷ out of the world."
16. Rabbi Jose said: "Let the wealth⁸ of thy companion be dear to thee as thine own"; "Set thyself to learn Torah,

¹ **Warm thyself** . . . : The general meaning of this saying is probably as follows. Let a man draw near to those learned in the Law in order that he may become conversant with it; but let him bear in mind the result, for increased knowledge of the Law means increased responsibility (*cp.* Rom. vii. 7 ff.), and if that increased responsibility is not lived up to a man will suffer for it. The expressions "bite of a fox," etc., are, in all probability, pictorial phrases denoting degrees of punishment from those in authority for transgressions of the Law.

² **their words . . . fire** : *cp.* Jer. v. 14.

³ **R. Joshua said** : Here the three sayings are compressed into one.

⁴ **An evil eye** : See note on verse 12.

⁵ **the evil tendency** : *Yetzer ha-ra'* = lust; the word *Yetzer* comes from the root צר, "to form" or "frame"; hence the word connotes what is formed or conceived in the mind, "purpose" or "intention." In the O.T. it is used in both a good sense (Is. xxvi. 3; 1 Chron. xxix. 18) and a bad one (Gen. vi. 5; viii. 21). It was later that the idea of the *Yetzer* being essentially evil arose, the evil nature or tendency (*Yetzer ha-ra'*); *cp.* Sir. xv. 14; xvii. 31; xxi. 11; xxxvii. 3; see also Mark vii. 21; still later there grew up the doctrine of a good tendency (*Yetzer ha-tob*) opposed to the evil one (*cp.* Rom. vii. 22, 23); one sees the beginning of this already in Sir. xxxiii. 14, 15. See further Weber, pp. 215 ff.

⁶ **hatred of mankind** : See note on i. 12; and with the thought *cp.* 1 John iii. 15.

⁷ **drive a man . . .** : *cp.* Sir. xxx. 24; the reference is to this world, though some commentators hold that the world to come is also included.

⁸ **wealth** : הון (*μικμωνās*); *cp.* Matt. vi. 24; Luke xvi. 11, 12; in Rabbinical literature this word is used in the general sense of possessions, whether of money, cattle, or other property.

for thou dost not inherit it";¹ and "Let all thy works be done in the name of Heaven."²

17. Rabbi Simeon said: "Be careful in reading the *Shema*'³ and in (offering) prayer"; and "When thou prayest make not thy prayer a mechanical formality,⁴ but (let it be) an entreaty⁵ before God";⁶

⁶ [Blessed be He!—as it is said: "For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy."]

and "Be not wicked⁷ in thine own eyes."

¹ **thou dost not . . .**: lit. "it is not an inheritance unto thee," *i.e.* each man has to acquire the knowledge of it by his own effort; though in another sense it is the inheritance of every Israelite; *cp.* Deut. xxxiii. 4: "Moses commanded as a law, an inheritance for the assembly of Jacob."

² **Let all thy works . . .**: *cp.* 1 Cor. x. 31; Col. iii. 17.

³ **the Shema'**: This is the name given to the combination of the three passages, Deut. vi. 4-9; xi. 13-21; Num. xv. 37-41, which is recited by every orthodox Jew twice daily (morning and evening). The name *Shema'* ("Hear") is given from the opening word. It occupies almost the position of a Creed, as the dominant idea in reciting it is to assert the divine unity: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One." In the Jewish Liturgy, of which the *Shema'* has formed a part from pre-Christian times, this opening passage is separated from the rest by the interjection of the words: "Blessed be His name, whose glorious kingdom is for ever and ever." *cp.* Mark xii. 29; see further Weber, pp. 41 ff., 85 ff.

⁴ **a mechanical formality**: *מכונה* means something fixed or permanent, as in i. 15, but it is also used in the sense of a perfunctory act; *cp.* Matt. vi. 5; xxiii. 14. In *Berakhoth* iv. 4, *e.g.*, reference is made to one who treats prayer as a perfunctory obligation, in which case prayer is not a means of grace (Jastrow).

⁵ **entreaty**: plur. in the original; two MSS. have "mercies and entreaties."

⁶ **God**: *Makōm*; see note on verse 13. Two MSS. add "Blessed be He," a later addition; the quotation (Joel ii. 13) is also a later addition.

⁷ **Be not wicked . . .**: *i.e.* Be not guilty of wilful, deliberate sin; *cp.* Sir. vii. 16.

18. Rabbi Eleazar said: "Be intent upon¹ learning how to answer an Epicurean";² and "Know before whom³ thou toilest"; and "(Know) who is master of thy work,"
⁴[who will pay thee the hire for thy labour.]
19. Rabbi Tarphon⁵ said: "The day is short,⁶ and the work is great, and the labourers are sluggish, and the hire is abundant,⁷ and the master⁸ of the house is urgent."
20. He said (further): "Thou canst not finish the work, nor art thou free to desist therefrom."⁹ "If thou hast learned

¹ **Be intent upon . . .**: This probably represents the best reading, but the MSS. vary, viz. "Be intent upon learning the Torah (in order) to answer . . ."; "Be intent . . . the Torah in order that thou mayest know how to answer . . ." The word rendered "be intent" (שָׂקַד) means to concentrate all one's efforts upon something.

² **an Epicurean**: In the early Rabbinical literature this is used of an unbeliever or a heretic, and especially of one who does not believe in life after death or in an overseeing Providence; *cp.* Josephus, *Antiq.* x. xi. 7. In the later literature the term is used in a wider sense of one who despises the Rabbis, or of one who does not believe in the divine origin of the Torah. See further G. Deutsch in *JE* i. 665 *a*. With the saying *cp.* 1 Pet. iii. 15.

³ **before whom**: *i.e.* God; *cp.* Rom. iv. 4.

⁴ The words in square brackets are found in two MSS.; they are a later gloss.

⁵ **Rabbi Tarphon**: Died early in the second century; he had been a priest of the Temple in his youth; he is spoken of as being strongly opposed to Jewish-Christians (T.B. *Shabbath* 116 *a*; see Bacher, *Agada der Tannaiten*, pp. 348 ff.).

⁶ **The day is short**: *i.e.* the span of life on earth; *cp.* John ix. 4: "We must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."

⁷ **the hire is abundant**: Omitted by two MSS.

⁸ **the master . . .**: *i.e.* God; with the saying generally, *cp.* Matt. ix. 37; xx. 1 ff.

⁹ **Thou canst not . . .**: lit. "It is not upon thee . . ."; three MSS. read "all the work." **nor art thou free**: וְלֹא אָפְקָה בְּךָ חוֹרֵן; in Bibl. Hebr. חוֹרֵם means "noblemen" (1 Kings xxi. 8, etc.), hence one who is a free-man; later the meaning was extended, as in this saying.

much Torah, they give thee¹ much reward; and faithful is He who is Master of thy work,² who will recompense thee the reward of thy work; and be thou assured³ that the gift of recompense⁴ of the righteous is for the time to come."⁵

CHAPTER III

- I. (1) AKABIAH BEN MAHALALEEL⁶ said: "Keep in mind three things, and thou wilt not come into the power of sin:⁷ Know whence thou camest, and whither thou art going,

According to the later usage the word is usually connected with בן ("son of"); *cp.* Eccles. x. 17 בן־החורין, "a free-man" (lit. "a son of nobles"). **therefrom**: Omitted by most of the MSS.

¹ **they give thee**: *i.e.* God (*cp.* the rest of the saying); this substitute for the name of God (*cp.* the use of "Heaven," always in the plur. in Hebr.) is frequent in Rabbinical literature; *cp.* iii. 5; an instance of it in the N.T. is Luke xvi. 9: ". . . that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." Another use of the 3rd pers. plur. in Rabbinical literature is that which is equivalent to "one"; the context usually makes it clear which of the two meanings intended.

² **Master of thy work**: *i.e.* He for whom the work is done.

³ **be thou assured**: lit. "know."

⁴ **the gift of recompense**: Note the doctrine of grace here implied see Weber, pp. 313 ff., 330 ff.); one should contrast this with the frequent insistence upon the efficacy of works in Rabbinical literature; *cp.* Rom. iv. 2; Gal. ii. 16; Eph. ii. 8-10.

⁵ **for the time to come**: לְעֵתָא לְבָיָא does not necessarily refer to the Hereafter (עוֹלָם הַבָּוִיָא); it refers to the indefinite future, and may, of course, include the future life.

⁶ **Akabiah b. M.**: The absence of the title Rabbi points to an early date; the time of his activity cannot be stated with certainty, but it was probably during the middle or latter half of the first century A.D. (see Strack, *Einleitung in den Talmud*, p. 85 [4th ed.], with the ref. there given).

⁷ **Keep . . . power of sin**: In ii. 1 these identical words are recorded of Judah ha-Nasi ("Rabbi").

and before whom thou wilt (have to) give¹ account² and reckoning:³—Whence thou camest: from decaying seed;⁴ and whither thou art going: to worm and maggot;⁵ and before whom thou wilt (have to) give account and reckoning: before the King of the kings of kings—Blessed be He!”

2. (2) Rabbi Chananiah, Sagan⁶ of the priests, said: “Pray⁷ for the peace of⁸ the kingdom, for were it not for the fear of it⁹

¹ **thou wilt (have to) give**: אָתָּה עָתִיד לֵהָיוֹ; the word עָתִיד means something fixed which is to happen, something that stands predetermined (the root = “to stand,” *cp.* עָמַד), and therefore something that is bound to happen in the future; hence the word is often used simply to express the future, as in the sentence before us. A frequent phrase in Rabbinical literature is לְעָתִיד לָבוֹא (abbreviated לְעָ״ל), meaning the Messianic future, or the life hereafter. For the form לֵהָיוֹ, *cp.* iv. 10; v. 1; it = the Biblical form לֵהָיֶה.

² **account**: lit. “judgement” (דִּין); see iv. 22 (concluding words).

³ **reckoning**: דְּחִשּׁוֹן, from the root חָשַׁב; a business term.

⁴ **decaying seed**: lit. “a foetid drop.”

⁵ **worm and maggot**: *cp.* ii. 7; iv. 4; Job xxv. 6; two MSS. add “dust.”

⁶ **R. Chananiah, Sagan . . .**: He lived before the destruction of the Temple; the title *Sagan* is used in the O.T. (only in the plur.) of prefects of Assyria (in Ezek. *passim*) and of petty rulers and officials in Judah under the suzerain power, Persia (only in Ezra and Neh.). Later the title was transferred to the chief of the priests in the Temple; and the office of the Sagan was apparently a kind of preparation for that of the high-priest; for, according to *Yoma* iii. 41 a, it was necessary for a priest to have been Sagan before he could be appointed high-priest; indeed, he could, if necessary, fulfil the functions of the high-priest (T.B. *Yoma* 39 a, Hoffmann). R. Chananiah is given the title of Sagan whenever he is mentioned in Rabbinical literature (*e.g.* *Eduyoth* ii. 1). Strack, *op. cit.*, p. 85, believes him to have been the last Sagan.

⁷ **Pray**: lit. “Be praying”; the Hebr. construction expresses continued action.

⁸ **the peace of . . .**: *cp.* I Tim. ii. 1, 2.

⁹ **the fear of it**: *i.e.* of the kingdom, meaning those who preserve order under the powers that be.

(every) man would¹ have swallowed up his neighbour alive."

3. (3) Rabbi Chananiah ben Teradyon² said: "(Where) two sit together without the words of the Torah, behold, there is the seat of the scornful, as it is said:³ 'Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful';⁴ but (where) two⁵ sit together and are occupied⁶ with the words of the Torah, there is the Shekhinah⁷ among them, as it is said: 'Then they

¹ (every) man would . . . : One MS. reads: "we should have . . ."; *cp.* for the phrase Ps. cxxiv. 3; Prov. i. 12; and see Jer. xxix. 7; Rom. xiii. 1 ff.

² . . . Teradyon: The spelling varies in the MSS. He suffered a martyr's death in A.D. 135.

³ as it is said: For this formula for introducing a quotation from Scripture, *cp.* Eph. iv. 8: "Wherefore he saith." St. Paul generally uses the formula "as it is written."

⁴ Nor sitteth . . . : Quoted from Ps. i. 1. It is worth noting that in Talmudic citations from the O.T. the whole of the verse or passage is not quoted, but only a few words from it, the rest being left for the reader to supply mentally.

⁵ but (where) two . . . : *cp.* with this saying Matt. xviii. 20: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

⁶ occupied: *cp.* iv. 10; vi. 1; the root קצו means to be diligently occupied with something, and is used of worldly business as well as of religious duties.

⁷ Shekhinah: This word comes from the root שׁכַן , "to dwell" or "to abide." The origin of the word in its technical sense is to be found in such O.T. passages as Exod. xl. 34 ff., in which it is told that "the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle," and the "cloud" dwelt (*shakan*) over it. The glory of the Lord, conceived of as a bright, shining light, was the sign of the divine presence or indwelling. Thus the ideas of God's "glory" and of His "indwelling" are very closely connected; one was the earnest of the other, and ultimately they became identified. But inasmuch as this *sign* of the presence of God was conceived of as something concrete, *i.e.* a cloud, it was in a certain sense differentiated from God Himself. This it was which in the speculations of later days gave a handle to the idea that the *medium* of God's indwelling itself partook of the nature of a quasi-personality. "Shekhinah is sometimes practically equivalent to Memra (Logos), but one may distinguish between them by regarding the one as the medium

that feared the Lord spake one with another, and the Lord hearkened and heard.'¹

- (4) ²[One that sitteth and studieth (the Torah) the Scripture reckoneth it to him as though he had fulfilled the whole Torah, as it is said: 'He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath laid it upon him.'"]

4. (5) Rabbi Simeon³ said; "Three who have eaten at one table, and have not spoken⁴ words of Torah over it, are as

of a *passive*, the other of an *active* manifestation; the one as creative, the other as overshadowing or indwelling. The two are brought together by St. John, in whose theology the conceptions assume a new definiteness, and the medium becomes a Mediator: ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν (i. 14). The word σκηνή and its derivatives are chosen on account of their assonance with the Hebrew to express the Shekhinah and its dwelling with men; *cp.* especially Rev. xxi. 3; and, indeed, so closely does Shekhinah resemble σκηνή that the former has even been thought of as a transliteration of the latter. The word is rare in the Mishnah, but occurs frequently in Midrash and Gemara" (Taylor, p. 44).

¹ **Then they that . . .**: Quoted from Mal. iii. 16; the point of the quotation lies in the words "one with another," *i.e.* two people speaking with one another. Some MSS. add the rest of the verse: "and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name."

² [**One that sitteth . . .**]: This is a later insertion; the differences of readings in the MSS. are not of importance; the quotation is from Lam. iii. 28.

³ **R. Simeon**: This is Simeon ben Jochai, frequently mentioned in the Mishnah, who lived during the beginning and middle of the second century A.D.; he was one of R. Akiba's leading pupils; *cp.* iv. 13; vi. 8. He taught in Galilee.

⁴ **. . . and have not spoken . . .**: It is probable that grace before and after a meal is referred to here; this has always been regarded as absolutely essential by the Jews; they trace the custom back to the patriarch Abraham (T.B. *Sota* 10 a). "The antiquity of thanksgiving after meals is attested by several ancient writers, *e.g.* Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* II. viii. 5. The custom of one of the company taking the lead in calling the rest to offer thanks is, according to the Palestinian Talmud (*Berakhoth* vii. 3), as old as Simeon ben Shetach . . ." (Abrahams, p. ccviii; *cp.* John vi. 11). The present Jewish Liturgy contains a

though they had eaten sacrifices for the dead,¹ as it is said: 'For all tables are full of vomit (and) filthiness (6) without Makom.'² But three who have eaten at one table, and have spoken words of Torah over it, are as though they had eaten from the table of Makom³—Blessed be He!—as it is said: 'And he said unto me, This is the table that is before the Lord.'⁴

5. (7) Rabbi Chaninah ben Chakinai⁵ said: "He that lies awake⁶ in the night and he that walks in the way alone,⁷ and turns⁸

special form of grace before and after meals, which is based on ancient material, and the pointed references to the Torah recall R. Simeon's words in the saying before us.

¹ **sacrifices for the dead:** Exaggerated statements such as this are frequently found in Rabbinical writings; they have the purpose of arresting the attention, and of driving home the lesson or warning given. Regarding "sacrifices for the dead," *cf.* the connected passages Num. xxv. 2, 3; Ps. cvi. 28 (see also Is. viii. 19). In the Mishnah tractate *Abodah Zarah* ii. 3, it is said that flesh which comes from an idol's temple is forbidden to Israelites "because it is looked upon as a sacrifice for the dead; these are the words of Rabbi Akiba." According to this, therefore, sacrifices for the dead are equivalent to sacrifices offered to idols; for these latter *cf.* 1 Cor. viii.

² **For all tables . . .:** Quoted from Is. xxviii. 18; on "Makom" see note to ii. 13.

³ **the table of Makom:** Evidently meaning the altar; *cf.* "the table of the Lord" in 1 Cor. x. 21.

⁴ **And he said unto me . . .:** Quoted from Ezek. xli. 22.

⁵ **R. Chaninah b. Ch.:** He lived during the first half of the second century A.D.; he was one of the elder disciples of R. Akiba; he belonged to Sidon.

⁶ **He that lies awake . . .:** Whenever a man is alone, the Rabbi teaches, his thoughts should be occupied with good things, *i.e.* with the words of the Torah, otherwise they are apt to wander into wrong directions; *cf.* 1 Thess. v. 10: ". . . that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him."

⁷ **alone:** יחיד, of which the Biblical form is יחד.

⁸ **and turns:** Reading תפס, which is probably the correct one, though a majority of the MSS. read תפס, making it a participle like the other two; in this case the meaning would be that he who lies awake in the night, and who walks in the way alone, and who turns

his heart to vain thoughts,¹ behold, such a man makes himself guilty² against his own soul."

6. (8) Rabbi Nechuniah ben ha-Kanah³ said: "Whosoever takes⁴ upon him the yoke of the Torah, from him is removed the yoke of the government⁵ and the yoke of worldly care;⁶ and whosoever breaks from off him the yoke⁷ of the Torah, they lay upon him the yoke of the government and the yoke of worldly care."

7. (9) Rabbi Chalaphtha⁸ of Kephars-Chananiah said: "When ten

his heart to vain thoughts, makes himself guilty, etc. This threefold form in uttering maxims is a favourite one among the early Rabbis. But the other reading commends itself because the saying emphasises the danger of loneliness; when a man is alone there is more danger of his giving way to vain thoughts than when he is in company.

¹ **vain thoughts**: בְּטִלָּה, lit. "vanity" or "idleness"; the root meaning is "to be void" or "empty."

² **makes himself guilty** . . . : *i.e.* sins against himself.

³ **R. Nechuniah b. ha-K.**: He lived during the greater part of the first century A.D., and was a contemporary of both R. Jochanan ben Zakkai and R. Akiba, and lived to a great age. According to Hoffmann, "ben-Kanah" is perhaps an abbrev. form of "ben-Kana'ah" (same root as Cain = smith); "the translation 'son of Zelotes' is in any case incorrect."

⁴ **Whosoever takes** . . . : lit. "receives"; with the saying *cf.* Matt. xi. 29, 30: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me . . ."; and *cf.* *Berakhoth* ii. 2: "the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven," and "the yoke of the commandments" (= Torah).

⁵ **government**: lit. "kingdom" (*malkuth*); as Taylor points out, "the yoke of *malkuth* stands for the burdens, as of taxation, put upon a man by the government under which he lives, or the oppression which he may suffer at the hands of the great." These things do not trouble a man when he gives himself whole-heartedly to the service of the Torah.

⁶ **worldly care**: lit. "the way of the earth" (דֶּרֶךְ אֲרֶץ); see note on ii. 2.

⁷ **breaks the yoke**: The same word (פָּרַק) occurs in iv. 7 in the sense of "freeing oneself"; *cf.* Gen. xxvii. 40, of "shaking off the yoke."

⁸ **R. Chalaphtha**: Some MSS: add "ben Dosa"; as this Rabbi lived rather later (second half of second century) than those who are

sit together¹ and are occupied with the Torah, the Shekhinah² is among them, as it is said: 'God standeth in the congregation of God.'

³ [And whence (can this be proved of) even five? as it is said: 'He judgeth among gods.']

named before and after him here, it is probable that this saying is out of place. He was a pupil of R. Meir (see iv. 14). Kephars-Chananiah is a small village in Galilee.

¹ **When ten sit together . . .**: *cf.* Matt. xviii. 20. The origin of the rule that not less than ten men are necessary to constitute a congregation is probably to be sought in the fact that ten heads of families formed in very early times the smallest political subdivision (see Exod. xviii. 21, 24); but in the Talmud the Biblical authority is said to be Num. xiv. 27: "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation which murmur against Me?" Regarding these words, it is said that they refer to the ten scouts sent to spy out the land, *i.e.* there were really twelve, but Caleb and Joshua were righteous; this left ten, who were an "evil congregation" (the Talmudic comment on the Mishnah *Megillah* i. 3). The number *ten* applied to this "congregation" (קהל = '*edah*') was supposed to suggest that any congregation assembled for worship should consist of not less than ten men. It is a good example of the way a Scriptural text is pressed into use provided it contains the *essential word*, in this case "congregation." Since, then, it was an understood thing that ten men constituted a sufficient number for the holding of divine service, *i.e.* a congregation, therefore the text from Ps. lxxxii. 1 ("God standeth in the congregation of God") was an appropriate one to cite in this connexion; for in the congregation of God, *i.e.* the ten men, God (the Shekhinah) standeth. The modern name for the minimum of ten is *Minyan*, lit. "count."

² **Shekhinah**: See note on iii. 3.

³ **[And whence (can . . .)]**: This is a later addition. The MSS. vary; some omit "five," others connect "five" with the proof-text, Amos ix. 6 ("He hath founded . . ."). The later Rabbi who inserted these words in brackets, desiring to give Biblical authority for the Shekhinah being among *five* men, bethought him that in a court of *judgement* the smallest number was five, *i.e.* three judges and two litigants; the essential word was "judge," which he found ready to hand in the same verse in which the previous essential word ("congregation") was found. But if, as in other MSS., the "five" is connected with Amos ix. 6, then the essential word is "troop" (אגודת), for

And whence (can this be proved of) even three?¹ as it is said: 'He hath founded his troop upon the earth.' And whence even (of) two?² as it is said: 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard.' And whence even (of) one?³ as it is said: 'In every place where I record My name I will come unto thee and bless thee.'"

8. (10) Rabbi Eleazar ben Jehudah⁴ of Bartotha⁵ said: "Give to Him⁶ of that which is His, for thou and that which is thine are His;⁷ and thus He saith in David:⁸ 'For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.'"⁹

in Hebrew this word also means a "bundle" which can be grasped with the "five" fingers.

¹ **And whence . . . even three? . . .**: Here "three" is connected with Amos ix. 6, where again "troop" (אֲנֻדָּה) is the essential word, because three is the smallest number of which a troop can consist; or one can explain it as Rashi does, who interprets the words in Exod. xii. 22, a "bundle" (אֲנֻדָּה), or bunch, of hyssop, as consisting of three stalks (Taylor).

² **And whence . . . (of) two? . . .**: Here the essential words in the proof-text, Mal. iii. 16, are "one to another" (lit. "a man to his neighbour"), *i.e.* two men.

³ **And whence . . . (of) one? . . .**: In the proof-text, Exod. xx. 24, the essential word is "thee," referring to a single person. This method of fixing on proof-texts from the Scriptures strikes us, of course, as very far-fetched and mechanical; but it must be remembered that this was the recognised Rabbinical method, and it is that which is not infrequently employed by the New Testament writers in their use of the Old Testament; *e.g.* Matt. ii. 15, 17, 18; iii. 3; Gal. iii. 16; iv. 27, 30; etc.

⁴ **R. Eleazar b. J.**: He lived at the end of the first, and early part of the second, century; a contemporary of R. Akiba. Ben Jehudah is omitted by some MSS.

⁵ **Bartotha**: a village in Upper Galilee.

⁶ **Give to Him**: *i.e.* to God.

⁷ **for thou and . . .**: *cf.* John xvii. 10.

⁸ **in David**: For the form of the phrase *cf.* Mark xii. 26; Rom. ix. 25; xi. 2; its exact form occurs in Hebr. iv. 7.

⁹ **For all things . . .**: This is a quotation from 1 Chron. xxix. 14, but the words "in David" are strictly correct, for the quotation is from David's hymn of thanksgiving.

9. (11) Rabbi Jacob¹ said: "He who walks in the way and studies,² and interrupts³ his study,² saying: 'How beautiful is this tree,' (or) 'How beautiful is this ploughed field,'⁴ the Scripture reckons it unto him⁵ as if he had made himself guilty against⁶ his own soul."

10. (12) Rabbi Dosthai ben Rabbi Jannai⁷ said in the name of⁸

¹ **Rabbi Jacob**: This is not the same R. Jacob mentioned in iv. 16, but the son of Eliezer ben Jacob the elder, who lived during the second half of the first century A.D. Some texts read here "Simeon," others "Akiba," but "Jacob" is the best attested reading.

² **and studies . . . his study**: The word in each case is "mishnah"; it comes from the root meaning "to repeat," hence "to learn"; the noun in its technical sense means "study," especially in relation to the Law, and then the result of this study, *i.e.* the Mishnah; the word is also used of a single passage from this compendium, "a mishnah," plur. *mishnaioth*. The Aramaic for Mishnah is *Tanna*, and this is the technical name (plur. *Tannaim*) given to the Rabbinical authorities during the first two centuries A.D.

³ **interrupts**: פסק = the Biblical פָּסַק ("to part" or "separate"; very rare, only Prov. xiii. 3; Ezek. xvi. 25).

⁴ **ploughed field**: נָרַי, from the root meaning "to break up," as distinct from "fallow ground" (בֹּרַי); the two are distinguished in *Peah* ii. 1 (Jastrow).

⁵ **the Scripture . . .**: דְּהִרְבּוּ מַעֲלָה עֲלָיו, "that which is written (*i.e.* the Scripture) reckons it unto him"; this is a frequently occurring phrase, and is usually followed by a quotation from Scripture; *cf.* Gal. iii. 22.

⁶ **. . . guilty against . . .**: *cf.* iii. 5, and see note there.

⁷ **R. Dosthai b. R. J.**: He lived during the latter half of the second century; the name Dosthai = Dositheos (it occurs in Josephus, *Antiq.* xv. vi. 2; *Apion.* ii. 5, and on an inscription found in Nysa in Asia Minor, Schürer, iii. pp. 16, 73; see also 3 Macc. i. 3). Greek names often occur in the Mishnah, *e.g.* Antigonos in i. 3 above. **Jannai**: An abbreviation for Jehonathan; for similar abbreviations see i. 8; ii. 8.

⁸ **in the name of**: The regular formula indicating from whom traditional teaching is handed down; lit. "from the name of" (מִשְׁמוֹ). The form שֵׁם = the Biblical שָׁם, though the later form occurs several times in Ezra and Daniel.

Rabbi Meir :¹ "Whosoever² forgets³ a single word of his study⁴ they reckon⁵ it unto him as though he had made himself guilty against his own soul, as it is said : 'Only take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the words which thine eyes have seen.'⁶ It might (however)⁷ be that his study was (too) hard for him (to remember), therefore learn to say : 'And lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life.'⁸ Thus,⁹ he has not made himself guilty against his own soul unless he sits (idle) and puts them away¹⁰ from his heart."

¹ **R. Meir** : See iv. 12.

² **Whosoever** : One MS. reads : "Whatsoever scholar among the wise (*Chakamim*) sits and studies and, etc."; this is probably a later addition.

³ **forgets . . .** : As the traditional handing down of the Oral Law was not committed to writing, anything that was forgotten was a permanent loss to later teachers.

⁴ **study** : lit. "mishnah."

⁵ **they reckon** : See note on preceding verse. Some MSS. have : "that which is written reckons it unto him." Here the usual rule of quoting the Scriptures after this formula is followed.

⁶ **Only take heed . . .** : Deut. iv. 9 ; in this text the words "which thine eyes have seen" did not, of course, apply to the Oral Law, but this did not trouble the ancient Rabbi ; it was sufficient that the text contained the essential words "lest thou forget the words."

⁷ **It might (however) . . .** : This is a mitigation of what might appear so severe a judgement (making himself guilty against his own soul) for a mere lapse of memory ; therefore, it is pointed out that it is not the simple forgetting which is blamed, but the deliberate and wilful failure to try to remember. Taylor appropriately refers to Isaac bar Shelomoh, who quotes from the Midrash *Sifre* (on Numbers and Deuteronomy) that "a man should be as careful to preserve his Torah as his money, for it is hardly gotten, as gold, and perishes easily, as glass (Job xxviii. 17). He who learns Torah and does not *repeat* it is as one who sows and does not reap. He who learns and forgets is like a mother that bears and buries."

⁸ **And lest . . .** : Continuation of the quotation from Deut. iv. 9.

⁹ **Thus** : lit. "Behold."

¹⁰ **and puts . . .** : lit. "and turns them away."

11. (13) Rabbi Chaninah ben Dosa¹ said: "Whosoever fear of sin² precedes³ his wisdom, that man's wisdom endures;⁴ and whosoever wisdom precedes his fear of sin, his wisdom endures not."
- 12.⁵ (14) He used to say: "Whosoever works⁶ are more abundant than his wisdom, his wisdom endures; and whosoever wisdom is more abundant than his works, his wisdom endures not."
- 13.⁷ (15) He used to say: "With whomsoever the spirit of mankind is pleased, the Spirit of God is pleased; and with whomsoever the spirit of mankind is not pleased, the Spirit of God is not pleased."⁸

¹ **R. Chaninah b. D.**: A contemporary of R. Jochanan ben Zakkai; he lived in the latter half of the first century A.D., and was specially celebrated as a worker of miracles. Some MSS. read Chananiah; but Chaninah is the name found in other writings. Dosa is an abbreviated form of Dosthai in the preceding verse.

² **Whosoever fear of sin . . .**: *cp.* Ps. cxi. 10: "The fear of the Lord is the zenith (צמרת) of wisdom." Wisdom in this saying means knowledge of the Law.

³ **precedes**: *i.e.* takes precedence.

⁴ **endures**: lit. "is confirmed."

⁵ This saying is omitted by two MSS.

⁶ **Whosoever works . . .**: *cp.* i. 17: "Not the study (of the Law), but the carrying out of it is the essential thing." The "works" refer here to the carrying out of the Law. Rabbinical opinion on the subject of the relative superiority between the study of the Law and the carrying out of the works of the Law differs. As opposed to the teaching of this saying, Taylor cites *Sifre* on the text Deut. xi. 13: "If ye shall hearken diligently unto My commandments," "as it is said: 'And ye shall learn them, and ye shall observe to do them' (Deut. v. 1). The Scripture shows that doing depends on learning, and not learning on doing." See further Weber, pp. 284 ff.

⁷ *AN* omits the whole of this saying; according to the *Tosephta*, *Berakhoth* iii. 3, it was uttered by R. Akiba.

⁸ **With whomsoever the . . .**: The saying is not to be taken in a literal sense; it is a general statement expressive of the belief that there is a correspondence of things in heaven and earth,

14. (16) Rabbi Dosa ben Harkinas¹ said: "Morning sleep,² and mid-day wine, and children's babbling, and sitting in the meeting-houses of the common people,³ drive a man⁴ out of the world."
15. (17) Rabbi Eleazar ha-Modai⁵ said: "He that profanes holy things⁶ and despises the set feasts,⁷ [and shames the face of his neighbour publicly]⁸ and makes the covenant⁹

¹ **R. Dosa b. H.**: He lived at the end of the first, and during the first half of the second, century, and was contemporary with the disciples of Jochanan ben Zakkai. Harkinas is another Greek name (= Ἀρχίβος).

² **Morning sleep . . .**: The real objection to all these four things is that they prevent whole-hearted study of the Law.

³ **the meeting-houses of . . .**: *i.e.* the synagogues of the *'am ha-aretz* (on these latter see note on ii. 6); *AN* explains by saying: "they that sit at the street-corners" (יֹשְׁבֵי קַרְנוֹת). The synagogue was not only used for worship; among other things children were taught there (*cp.* the modern name among the common folk for the synagogue, *Shool*).

⁴ **drive a man . . .**: See note on ii. 14.

⁵ **R. Eleazar ha-M.**: One MS. reads R. Li'ezer. He lived during the latter half of the first, and former half of the second, century, and was an active supporter of the Bar Cochba rebellion in the reign of Hadrian. The name of ha-Modai, "the Modinite," was given him because he was a native of Modin (Modi'im), the present El-Medije, east of Lydda, celebrated as the home of the Maccabæan family, 1 Macc. ii. 1-5, 70; xiii. 25.

⁶ **holy things**: *AN* reads "Sabbaths." *Kodashim* ("holy things") and *Mo'ed* ("set feast") are the names of Mishnic tractates, and treat respectively of holy things and festivals.

⁷ **the set feasts**: *ha-mo'adoth* (*cp.* 2 Chron. viii. 13) refer here probably to the days which are holy days between the feasts of Passover and Tabernacles, for these feasts themselves are not likely to have been ignored by any. There is no Biblical prohibition of work on these intermediate days, though Rabbinical law forbade work during them.

⁸ **[and shames . . . publicly]**: These words are omitted by *AN* and two MSS., while two others place them after the next sentence. They are not original. The word "to shame" here means lit. "to make white."

⁹ **and makes the covenant . . .**: *cp.* 1 Macc. i. 15: ". . . and they

of our father Abraham of none effect, and acts¹ barefacedly against the Torah—he has no portion in the world to come,² even though there be good works³ to his credit.”

16. (18) Rabbi Ishmael⁴ said: “Be quick (in doing service) to a superior,⁵ and kindly disposed towards the aged,⁶ and receive every man with cheerfulness.”

made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant” (“Epispasmus”); *cp.* 1 Cor. vii. 18.

¹ **and acts . . .**: One MS. omits the words: “and acts barefacedly against the Torah, even though there be good works to his credit.” *AN* adds after “the Torah,” “which is not according to the Hala-kah,” *i.e.* the traditional way, or rule. The phrase lit. is “and uncovers his face against the Torah,” in contrast to covering the face out of reverence; see Is. vi. 2.

² **the world to come**: See note on ii. 8.

³ **though there be good works . . .**: Several MSS. have wrongly: “though there be Torah and good works . . .” According to Rabbinical teaching a man’s good works were balanced against his evil ones, and according as to whether the good or the evil weighed heavier he entered into bliss or torment; in T.B. *Kiddushin* 40*b* it is said that a man is judged “according to that which balances,” *i.e.* according as to whether the good or the evil deeds weigh down the balance; *cp.* Dan. v. 27. “Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting.”

⁴ **R. Ishmael**: lived during the latter part of the first, and former half of the second, century; a contemporary of R. Akiba. His home was in Kephrah ‘Asis, a village on the border of Edom.

⁵ **Be quick . . . superior**: The meaning of this phrase is uncertain; lit. it is: “Be light of head,” or “to a head.” In support of the rendering “quick” we have in v. 20: “Be swift as an eagle . . . to do the will of thy Father in Heaven”; \aleph is not infrequently used in the sense of “quick.” The word for “superior” is ראש, lit. “head”; and often occurs in this sense; *cp.* Job xxix. 25, where ראש is parallel to מלך (“king”). The same expression, “light of head,” occurs in the next saying, but there it is in an entirely different connexion and means a careless disposition.

⁶ **and kindly . . . aged**: Here again the meaning is uncertain; as to the word rendered “the aged” (it is an abstract noun in the original), זקנות is used in several senses. Hoffmann cites several passages in favour of the meaning “old age,” and for the general sense *cp.* Eccles. xii. 2; moreover, this meaning makes a good parallel to

17. (19) Rabbi Akiba¹ said: "Laughter and levity² lead to lewdness."³
18. (20) He used to say: "The Tradition⁴ is a fence to the Torah; vows are a defence to self-control; ⁵ silence ⁶ is a defence to wisdom."
19. (21) He used to say: "Beloved is man who has been created in the image (of God); [It was greater love that it was made known to him that he was created in the image (of God);]⁷ as it is said: 'For in the image of God He made man.'"

"a superior" in the first clause of the saying. In other places the word means just the contrary, viz. "youth," and in yet others "government"; the commentators vary in their interpretation of the word here.

¹ **R. Akiba**: Born in the middle of the first century, he was killed about 135 A.D. as being one of the chief supporters of the Bar Cochba rebellion; he believed that Bar Cochba was the Messiah. He was of non-Jewish parentage, and until his fortieth year was opposed to the Rabbis, yet ultimately he gained a name which was second to none among the Rabbis. It was evident, as Strack (*Einleitung in den Talmud*, p. 19, 4th ed.) shows, that R. Akiba had already begun a mishnic collection; the words "the Mishnah of R. Akiba" occur repeatedly; for full evidence see Strack.

² **levity**: lit. "lightness of head."

³ **lewdness**: מַעֲרָב ; the plur. form occurs in v. 9. *AN* adds: "It is a defence to (a man's) honour not to be frivolous."

⁴ **The Tradition** . . . : Massoreth, or Massorah; see notes on i. 1. These words are missing in one MS. Some MSS. add: "Tithes are a fence to wealth."

⁵ **self-control**: lit. "separation"; the usual connexion in which the word is used shows that it means "self-control," whether from fleshly or other forms of indulgence; see Jastrow, *s.v.* A vow of abstinence acts as a defence.

⁶ **silence** . . . : *cp.* i. 17.

⁷ **[It was greater . . .]**: Several MSS. omit this clause; it is evidently not original, for the proof-text (Gen. i. 27; *cp.* ix. 6) does not bear it out. That the fact of *making known* an act of grace is greater proof of love than the act of grace itself is open to question; the statement was probably added on account of the exaggerated veneration for the Torah through which it was "made known." According to *AN*, this saying is ascribed to R. Meir, who probably heard it from R. Akiba (Hoffmann).

20. (22) "Beloved are Israel which are called the sons of God.¹ It was greater love that it was made known to them that they were called the sons of God, as it is said: 'Ye are the sons of the Lord your God.'²
21. (23) "Beloved are Israel to whom was given a precious instrument³ wherewith the world was created. It was greater love that it was made known to them that there was given unto them a precious instrument whereby the world was created, as it is said: 'For a good doctrine have I given you; forsake not my Law.'⁴

¹ God: "Makom"; see note on ii. 13.

² Ye are the sons . . . : Quoted from Deut. xiv. 1; *cp.* 1 John iii. 1, 2.

³ a precious instrument . . . : "Precious" is omitted by some authorities; so, too, in the next sentence. The "instrument" is the Torah. The doctrine that the world was created by the Torah is logically evolved from various other doctrines of Judaism; first, the Torah is the expression of the divine mind and will; then, the Torah and Wisdom are again and again identified (*e.g.* Sir. v. 23; Baruch iv. 1; etc.); moreover, an identification, or something very close to it, is taught between the Torah and the Memra (= "Word" of God). Bearing these identifications in mind, and remembering how distinctly it is taught that the world was created by the Wisdom (*e.g.* Wisd. viii. 22-31, etc.) and by the Word (*e.g.* Ps. xxxiii. 6; *cp.* cxlviii. 9; Sir. xlii. 15; Wisd. iv. 1; 4 Esdras vi. 38; *cp.* John i. 1 ff.) of God, it is easy to understand how the idea arose of the world having been created by the instrumentality of the Torah. In connexion with this, it is worth pointing out that the existence of the Torah before the creation of the world is directly taught, *e.g.* in the Midrash *Bereshith Rabba* i.: "Six things preceded the creation of the world; among them were such as were themselves truly created, and such as were decided upon before the Creation; the Torah and the throne of glory were truly created." In chap. viii. of the same Midrash it is said that the Torah was created 2,000 years before the Creation. In the Talmud, *Zebachim* 116 a, an old tradition is preserved according to which Balaam said to the Gentile kings: "Jehovah has a precious jewel in His treasure-house which was held hidden for nine hundred and seventy-four generations before the creation of the world; this treasure He will give to His children, *i.e.* the Israelites." The "precious jewel" is the Torah. The Israelites are called "the people of the Law" because, although it was offered to all nations, only the Israelites accepted it; this is taught in the Midrash *Pesikta* 186 a.

⁴ For a good doctrine . . . : Quoted from Prov. iv. 2.

22.¹ (24) "Everything is foreseen,² and free-will³ is given"; and "The world is judged by grace, yet all is according⁴ to the abundance⁵ of work."

23. (25) He used to say: "Everything is given as an earnest⁶ (of

¹ Doctrinally these two sayings are among the most important of the whole tractate. They offer a striking example of the sense of proportion in doctrinal teaching, which is not always conspicuous in Rabbinical writings. In these writings the main stress is usually laid on free-will and the efficacy of works; not that divine providence and grace are left out of sight—far from that; but they occupy relatively a less important position. R. Akiba is strikingly sane and balanced in his teaching here, following in this respect Ben-Sira, and reminding one of the Pauline teaching in such a passage as Eph. ii. 8-10: "... for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared, that we should walk in them"; *cp.* Rom. ii. 6; ix.-xi.

² **foreseen**: נצפה, past part. from נָצַף; the Biblical sense is "to watch" or "to look out" (*e.g.* Gen. xxxi. 49; Prov. xv. 3); this is also frequently the meaning in neo-Hebrew, but in this latter the extended meaning of "foreseeing" often occurs, *e.g.* "every event is foreseen by the Lord," Tanchuma, *Shelach* ix. (Jastrow).

³ **free-will**: רשות (*rashuth*) means ordinarily "authority," as in i. 10; then the authority that a man has over himself, *i.e.* his free-will. The word has also the technical sense of "personality" in reference to God in Rabbinical literature. See further Weber, pp. 78 f.

⁴ **yet all is . . .**: Four MSS. read: "not according to . . ."; but the above is evidently the correct reading.

⁵ **abundance**: One MS. omits.

⁶ **Everything . . . as an earnest**: The meaning of this difficult saying is in part elucidated by the N.T. passages in which the word for "earnest" (ערבון = ἀρραβών) occurs, viz. 2 Cor. i. 22: "... who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts"; v. 5: "... who gave us the earnest of the Spirit"; Ephes. i. 13, 14: "... in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance." In each case something is accorded which is a pledge, or surety, or earnest of something else. In the saying before us, what is meant is that everything which God has accorded to man is in itself a pledge, or surety, or earnest of something else; and that something else is a *quid pro quo* from man. Every man has received good things from God, and from every man something in return will, sooner or later, have to be given. The proof of this lies, according to R. Akiba, in the nature

repayment); and the net¹ is cast over all the living. The office² is opened, and the broker³ gives credit; and the writing-tablet⁴ is opened,⁵ and the hand writes; and everyone who desires to borrow comes and borrows;⁶ and the collectors⁶ go round continually⁷ every day, and exact payment⁸ from a man whether he knows or not;⁹

of all God's gifts to man. The picture of the business-house with God as the broker in his office, giving credit and exacting payment from his creditors, is, of course, not to our taste. But it should be recognised that there is a real truth (somewhat one-sidedly stated, it is true) in what is said, viz. that the divine gifts accorded to men demand a return, in some form or other, from men; and that sooner or later that return will have to be made. It is in the nature of divine gifts that they cannot be without effect; they are in themselves the earnest that that effect will be produced. This is all one side of the truth, and is an illustration of what R. Akiba said in the preceding saying: "all is according to the abundance of work." The other side of the truth, "the world is judged by grace," is subordinated, as so often by the Rabbis; but we are justified in seeing a reference to it at the end of this saying in the words: "the judgement is a judgement of truth." For the Christian development of the doctrine, *cp. e.g.* 1 Cor. vi. 20; vii. 23: "Ye were bought with a price."

¹ **and the net . . .**: *i.e.* what has been said applies to all without exception; for the thought *cp.* Matt. xiii. 47 ff.: "The kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net . . ."

² **the office**: *i.e.* the world.

³ **the broker**: *i.e.* God.

⁴ **writing-tablet**: סֵפֶר (= *πῖναξ*); *cp.* Luke i. 63, *πινακίδιον*; in Rabbinical literature this word is generally used of the "book" in which a tradesman noted debts owing to him, so that the expression "to open the writing-tablet" (סֵפֶר פִּנְקָס) is often = to see what is owing (Krauss, iii. 145). In the Gospels *πῖναξ* has a different meaning; *cp.* Matt. xiv. 8; Luke xi. 39.

⁵ The words "and the broker gives credit; and the writing-tablet is opened," as well as "and everyone who desires to borrow comes and borrows," are omitted by one MS.

⁶ **the collectors**: *i.e.* the angels.

⁷ **continually**: Two MSS. omit.

⁸ **exact payment**: When a man does not pay his due by right living, payment is exacted by calamity, sickness, etc., by way of atonement.

⁹ **whether he knows or not**: *i.e.* whether he realises or not that

and they have¹ that upon which they rely.² And the judgement is a judgement of truth; and everything is prepared for the banquet."³

24. (26) Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah⁴ said: "If (there be) no Torah, (there is) no courtesy;⁵ if (there be) no courtesy, (there is) no Torah. If (there be) no wisdom,⁶ (there is) no fear (of God); if (there be) no fear (of God), (there is) no wisdom. If (there be) no knowledge, (there is) no discernment; if (there be) no discernment, (there is) no knowledge. If (there be) no corn,⁷ (there is) no Torah; if (there be) no Torah, (there is) no corn."

his calamity or sickness is in lieu of the debt he owes. That sickness and death atone for sin is often taught in Rabbinical writings; see the present writer's *The Jewish Doctrine of Mediation*, pp. 109 f.

¹ **and they have . . .**: *i.e.* the angels have the record of debts in the writing-tablet.

² **rely**: lit. "lean."

³ **the banquet**: Bliss in the world to come is often spoken of figuratively as a "banquet" in Rabbinical writings. The origin of the idea, so far as Judaism is concerned, is probably to be found in such passages as Zeph. i. 7; Is. xxv. 6; it is greatly developed in the Apocalyptic literature; see, *e.g.*, Enoch xxv. 4, 5; lx. 7, 8; lxii. 14; Test. xii. Patr.; Levi xviii. 11; Syriac Apoc. of Baruch xxix. 3-8; Sib. Orac. Proœm. 87, iii. 746; 4 Esdras vi. 49-52; and in Rabbinical writings it is still elaborated; *cp.* also Matt. viii. 11; xxvi. 29; Rev. xix. 9.

⁴ **R. Eleazar b. A.**: He lived during the second part of the first century A.D., and died about 120 A.D. He was President of the Sanhedrin in Jabne after Gamliel II. had been deposed.

⁵ **courtesy**: $\Upsilon\aleph \Upsilon\aleph$, lit. "way of the earth"; see note on ii. 2; the phrase has various meanings, according to its context. Here it means the courteous behaviour which ought to be shown to one's fellow-creatures.

⁶ **If (there be) no wisdom . . .**: *cp.* Job xxviii. 28; Ps. cxi. 10; Prov. i. 7; ix. 10; xv. 33; Sir. i. 14; xxv. 10; Eccles. xii. 13.

⁷ **If (there be) no corn . . .**: lit. "meal"; the words mean that both spiritual and physical nourishment are needed; *cp.* Prov. ix. 5 and Sir. xv. 3: "And she (*i.e.* Wisdom) will feed him with the bread of understanding, and give him the waters of knowledge to drink."

25. (27) He used to say: "Whosoever wisdom is greater than his works, unto what is he like?¹ To a tree whose branches are abundant, but whose roots are scanty; and the wind comes, and uproots it, and overturns it.² And whosoever works are more abundant than his wisdom, unto what is he like? Unto a tree whose branches are scanty, and whose roots are abundant; if all the winds that are in the world³ come and blow upon it, they move it not from its place."⁴
26. (28) Rabbi Eleazar Chasama⁵ said: "(The teaching contained in) *Kinnin*,⁶ and in the opening (sections) of *Niddah*,⁶ these

¹ **unto what is he like?** : למד הוא דומה, one of the regular formulas for introducing a comparison; *cp.* Luke xiii. 18.

² **overturns it** : lit. "turns it upon its face." Some authorities add: "As it is said: He shall be like a tamarisk in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, etc." (Jer. xvii. 6). This is in all probability a later addition, as it spoils the terse and concise form of the saying.

³ **that are in the world** : Omitted by two MSS.

⁴ **from its place** : Some authorities add: "As it is said: He shall be like a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out his roots by the river, and he feareth not when the heat cometh, and his leaf shall be green, and in the year of drought he shall not be careful, neither shall he cease from yielding fruit" (Jer. xvii. 8). *cp.* with the general form and thought of this saying Matt. vii. 24-27.

⁵ **R. Eleazar Ch.** : He lived at the end of the first, and first half of the second, century A.D. Some MSS. insert "ben" before Chasama, but wrongly (see Strack *in loc.*). The name Chasama is pointed by some authorities Chisma, by others Chasma; its exact pronunciation is uncertain. This saying is omitted by one of the MSS.; in another it is added by a later hand in the margin.

⁶ **Kinnin . . . Niddah** : The names of Mishnah tractates, meaning respectively "Nests" and "Uncleanness (of women)"; the former deals with the offerings of birds which were brought by women after child-birth ("two turtle-doves or two young pigeons," Lev. xii. 8; *cp.* Luke ii. 24), and various other cognate subjects. The other deals with the whole subject of the uncleanness of women (Lev. xv. 19 ff.); the opening sections refer especially to the state of women after child-birth. There is, therefore, a direct connexion between the subjects dealt with in these two tractates. Why these should have been regarded as constituting the essentials of the *Halakoth* is possibly

constitute the essentials of the *Halakoth*.¹ The (teaching concerning) astronomical cycles² and mathematical problems³ are secondary matters⁴ of wisdom."

CHAPTER IV

I. (I) BEN ZOMA⁵ said: "Who is wise? He that learns from every man, as it is said: 'From all my teachers have

because they contain some of the most intricate arguments and discussions in the Mishnah, so that if a man grasps them he can grasp any.

¹ **Halakoth**: (One MS. reads "Torah," but wrongly.) Plur. of *Halakah*, from the root *halak*, "to go"; it means the "way" in which a man should walk in accordance with legal directions. The word is, therefore, used of the Law, which directs the whole manner of life of a pious Israelite; and then in the more restricted sense, as here, of individual rules. See further Weber, pp. 34 ff., 85 ff., 91 ff., 100 ff.

² **astronomical cycles**: תְּקִיפָה, in Ps. xix. (6) 7 the word is used of the "circuit" of the sun, but in post-Biblical Hebrew it means "solstice."

³ **mathematical problems**: "Gematria" (= γεωμετρία). R. Eleazar is stated (in T.B. *Horajoth* 10 a) to have been a great mathematician (Hoffmann). The word "denotes an arithmetical method of exegesis, in which the numerical values of the Hebrew letters—which, like the Greek, are used to denote numbers—are taken into account. Thus one word may be substituted for another to which it is numerically equivalent, as in *Bereshith Rabba* lxviii., where Jacob's *ladder* is identified with Mount *Sinai*, since סלס, 'ladder' (60+30+40), is equal to סיני, 'Sinai' (60+10+50+10) . . ." (Taylor).

⁴ **secondary matters**: The word פְּרִיטָה means lit. something "broken up," and is then applied to the "dessert" after a meal, when broken almonds and sweetmeats were served; it thus means something pleasant and enjoyable, but not essential. The word comes from the root פָּרַץ (*philpel*), meaning "to crush" (e.g. of crumbling a hard-boiled egg over fish), and has nothing to do with "fringes," as though the word were a Hebraised form of περιφέρεια, "circumference."

⁵ **Ben Zoma**: He lived at the end of the first, and former half of the second, century A.D., and was a younger contemporary of R. Akiba. His full name was Simeon b. Zōma. He was a great mystic and theosophist, of whom it is said that he both "looked, and became,

- (2) I got understanding.¹ Who is mighty? He that masters his nature,² as it is said: 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.'³ Who is rich? He that is contented with his lot, as it is said: 'When thou eatest the labour of thy hands, happy art thou, and it shall be well with thee.'⁴ 'Happy art thou' in this world, 'and it shall be well with thee' in the world to come.
- (4) Who is honoured? He that honours all men,⁵ as it is said: 'For them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.'⁶

2. (5) Ben Azzai⁷ said: "Run to⁸ a precept⁹ (however) small;¹⁰ but flee from transgression.¹¹ For precept leads to¹² precept, and transgression leads to transgression;¹³ for the

demented" (quoted by Taylor); this must have been after he uttered the saying before us, one of the wisest ever put forth. The proof-texts here, with one exception, are thoroughly appropriate, but they somewhat detract from the terse forcefulness of the words.

¹ **From all . . .**: Adapted from Ps. cxix. 99.

² **nature**: *Yetzer*; see note on ii. 14.

³ **He that is slow . . .**: Quoted from Prov. xvi. 32.

⁴ **When thou eatest . . .**: Quoted from Ps. cxxviii. 2.

⁵ **all men**: lit. "mankind" (הַבְּרִיּוֹת); see note on i. 12.

⁶ **For them that honour . . .**: Quoted from 1 Sam. ii. 30, where these words are put into the mouth of God; the text is inappropriate, but it contains the essential word "honour."

⁷ **Ben Azzai**: His full name was Simeon ben A.; a contemporary of Ben Zoma. Note that neither Ben A. nor Ben Z. is given the title "Rabbi."

⁸ **Run to . . .**: *i.e.* for the purpose of fulfilling it.

⁹ **precept**: lit. "commandment."

¹⁰ **small**: lit. "light." One authority wrongly adds: "as towards a weighty one."

¹¹ **flee from transgression**: *cf.* 1 Cor. vi. 18: "Flee fornication"; 1 Cor. x. 14: "Flee from idolatry"; 2 Tim. ii. 22: "Flee also youthful lusts."

¹² **leads to**: *i.e.* brings in its train.

¹³ **transgression leads to . . .**: *cf.* Schiller's words, *Die beiden Piccolomini*, act v., sc. 1:

"This is the curse of every evil deed,
That it begets a further deed of shame."

reward of precept is precept, and the reward of transgression is transgression."

3. (6) He used to say: "Despise no man, nor deem aught¹ impossible; for thou wilt see² that there is no man but has his day,³ nor anything⁴ that has not its place."
4. (7) Rabbi Levitas⁵ of Jabneh said: "Be very lowly of spirit, for man's expectation is but worms."⁶
5. Rabbi Jochanan⁷ ben Berokah said: "Whosoever profanes the name of God⁸ in secret they⁹ punish him openly;¹⁰ it is one whether,¹¹ in profaning the Name, a man do it unintentionally¹² or¹¹ of set purpose."¹³

¹ **nor deem aught . . .**: The word means lit. putting something in the far distance.

² **thou wilt see . . .**: lit. "there is not to thee"; the original must be paraphrased.

³ **day**: lit. "hour."

⁴ **nor anything . . .**: *cp.* Eccles. iii. 1-8.

⁵ **R. Levitas . . .**: Presumably a contemporary of R. Akiba; nothing is known of him personally, though some sayings of his are preserved in *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* (see Gerald Friedlander's edition, pp. 169, 422, 434). In one MS. the words of the next verse, "Whosoever profanes . . ." are erroneously inserted here.

⁶ **Be very lowly . . .**: *cp.* verse 12. This saying is an inexact quotation from Sir. vii. 17: "Humble altogether thy pride, for man's expectation is worms"; *cp.* iii. 3; Job xiv. 19; Prov. xi. 23; Enoch xlvi. 6.

⁷ **R. Jochanan . . .**: He lived at the end of the first, and former half of the second, century A.D.

⁸ **God**: lit. "Heaven."

⁹ **they**: *i.e.* God; "they" is frequently used in this way in Rabbinical writings; *cp.* Luke xvi. 9: ". . . that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles."

¹⁰ **secret . . . openly**: *cp.* 2 Sam. xii. 12; Eccles. xii. 14; Luke viii. 17.

¹¹ **it is one whether . . . or . . .**: This use of אָדוּר . . . אָדוּר is Rabbinical, not Biblical.

¹² **a man do it unintentionally**: שָׁגָג = "to do wrong inadvertently."

¹³ **of set purpose**: נִדְּבָר = "to act with premeditation." The profanation of the Name of God was an unforgivable sin, whether committed

6. (8) Rabbi Ishmael,¹ his son, said : " He that learns in order² to teach, they³ fully grant to him⁴ the faculty of learning and teaching ;⁵ and he that learns in order that he may accomplish,⁶ they fully grant him the faculty of learning and teaching⁵ and accomplishing."
7. (9) Rabbi Zadok⁷ said: " Make them not⁸ a crown to glory in,⁹

intentionally or not ; if done without utterance, in the heart, it was considered as equally sinful, and punished by God, if not by man, according to R. Jochanan ; but in *Sanhedrin* vii. 5 it is said that " the blasphemer is not punishable unless he pronounces the name openly." It was, however, regarded as a profanation of the name of God even to utter the " Tetragrammaton" (יהוה), which was only pronounced by the high-priest when giving the blessing in the Temple on the Day of Atonement (*cp.* *Yoma* vi. 2). This name is known as the שם המפורש (*Shem ha-mephoresh*), the true meaning of which is uncertain ; the root means " to separate," and also " to explain" or " specify" ; it might, therefore, mean the name that is separate from all other names, or the name which explains the being of the Deity, or the name which specifies the Deity. Taylor (p. 56) refers to *Wisdom* xiv. 21, τὸ ἀκοινωνητὸν ὄνομα, " the incommunicable name" ; the context, however, shows that it is not the " Tetragrammaton" as such that is here referred to, but simply that the name of Israel's one God must not be shared by any other god.

¹ **R. Ishmael** : He lived during the middle of the second century A.D. ; " his son " is omitted by two MSS.

² **in order** : על־ימנת " on condition that," " for the sake of," often abbreviated to ע"מ. The word מנת means lit. " share," or " that which is appointed " to someone. The learning and teaching refer to the Torah.

³ **they** : *i.e.* God.

⁴ **to him** : lit. " to his hand" ; for the phrase מספקין בידו *cp.* 1 Kings xx. 10.

⁵ **teaching** (2) : Some authorities add " and observing," *i.e.* Torah precepts.

⁶ **accomplish** : *i.e.* works of Torah.

⁷ **R. Zadok** : He lived during the first century A.D., while the Temple was still standing, and was thus a contemporary of Jochanan ben Zakkai.

⁸ **Make them not** : *i.e.* the words of the Torah ; another, less authoritative, reading is : " Make it " (the Torah). The saying means that a man must not use the Torah for selfish ends.

⁹ **to glory in** : lit. " wherewith to glorify thyself."

nor a spade to dig with.”¹ And in the same way² Hillel³ said: “And he who uses⁴ the Crown to his own advantage will perish.” Behold,⁵ whosoever profits⁶ by the words of the Torah removes his life from the world.⁷

8. (10) Rabbi Jose⁸ said: “Whosoever honours the Torah is himself⁹ honoured by all men,¹⁰ and whosoever dishonours the Torah is himself dishonoured by all men.”
9. (11) Rabbi Ishmael,¹¹ his son,¹² said: “He that refrains from acting as judge¹³ frees himself from enmity,¹⁴ and theft,¹⁵

¹ **a spade to dig with**: קרס (“spade”) occurs rarely in the O.T. (1 Sam. xiii. 20; Ps. lxxiv. 5, “axe”), but more often in later Hebrew; it was really a combination of a spade and an axe, one arm consisting of a broad blade like a hatchet, the other being pointed; so that it is spoken of as being used for cleaving wood and also for breaking up the soil (see Nowack, *Hebräische Archäologie*, i. 246; Krauss, ii. 642; and for other references Jastrow, *s.v.*). Another reading, less authoritative, is: “a dish to eat of,” which alters the metaphor, but not the meaning.

² **in the same way**: כן “thus” = ככה in the O.T., Exod. xii. 11, etc.

³ **Hillel**: See i. 12.

⁴ **he who uses . . .**: See i. 13 and note.

⁵ **Behold . . .**: Probably a later insertion; the readings vary.

⁶ **whosoever profits**: Reading בְּלִידֵי קֶדְשָׁא.

⁷ **from the world**: See note on ii. 14.

⁸ **R. Jose**: Usually referred to as R. Jose ben Chalaphta; he lived during the greater part of the second century A.D.

⁹ **himself**: גופו, lit. “his body” or “his person.”

¹⁰ **all men**: בריות; see note on “men,” i. 12.

¹¹ **R. Ishmael**: He lived during the second part of the second, and beginning of the third, century. *AN* has “Bar Kappara”; one MS. reads “Rabbi Simeon.”

¹² **his son**: Two authorities omit.

¹³ **from acting as judge**: lit. “from judgement.”

¹⁴ **from enmity**: because the party against whom he pronounces judgement becomes his enemy.

¹⁵ **theft**: because by an error of judgement he may condemn an innocent man to pay.

and false swearing;¹ and he that is arrogant² in (giving a) decision³ is foolish,⁴ wicked, and headstrong."²

10. (12) He used to say: "Judge not alone,⁵ for none may judge alone save One";⁶ and "Say not: 'Accept ye⁷ my opinion,' for (while) they are free⁸ (to say this), thou art not."
11. (13) Rabbi Jonathan⁹ said: "Whosoever fulfils the Torah (when) in poverty¹⁰ will in the end fulfil it in wealth; and whosoever neglects the Torah (when) in wealth will in the end neglect it in poverty."

¹ **false swearing**: because he may, though unwillingly, be the cause of making a witness perjure himself.

² **he that is arrogant . . . headstrong**: הַנָּס לִבּוֹ, lit. "haughty as to his heart"; נִס לְרוּחַ, lit. "haughty as to his spirit." The root (נָסָה) means "to be big," and then is used of one who makes himself big, *i.e.* haughty.

³ **decision**: הוֹרָאָה, not "teaching" here; the context shows that the word is used in its technical sense of a judicial decision.

⁴ **foolish**: The root שָׁמַי means usually "to be demented."

⁵ **Judge not alone**: In chap. i. of the Mishnic tractate *Sanhedrin* the rules are recorded giving the number of judges who presided over the different tribunals. For the provincial courts three was the minimum; seven, and, in certain cases, twenty-three, were recommended; in the great Sanhedrin there had to be seventy-one.

⁶ **save One**: See Gen. xviii. 25; Ps. lxxv. 7; Is. xxxiii. 22; *cf.* 2 Tim. iv. 8; Hebr. xii. 23.

⁷ **Say not: 'Accept ye . . .'**: No single judge was allowed to try to assert himself against his colleagues.

⁸ **they are free . . .**: Where a majority were agreed they were free to try to induce one dissentient to agree with them, but not *vice versa*.

⁹ **R. Jonathan**: This is in all probability the right reading; two authorities read "R. Jochanan," and one has "R. Nathan." According to *AN* 30, this Rabbi is R. Jonathan, the son of Joseph, a pupil of R. Akiba, not the R. Jonathan the pupil of R. Ishmael, who is never mentioned in the Mishnah (Hoffmann); nevertheless, it is probably this latter who is meant here; he lived during the middle portion of the second century A.D.

¹⁰ **in poverty**: בְּעֵינֵי; for this use of בְּ (lit. "from") *cf.* Jer. xxxi. 13 (Strack); in Rabbinical writings it often has the sense of "when." It is also grammatically possible to translate "because of poverty"; but the general sense of the saying requires the former rendering; *cf.*

- Luke vi. 21, 25 (Taylor).

12. (14) Rabbi Meir¹ said: "Do little business, but be busy with the Torah"; and "Be lowly of spirit² before all men"; and "If thou hast been idle (in regard to) the Torah, many idle things³ will stand in thy way; but if thou labourest in the Torah, He⁴ hath much reward to give thee."
13. (15) Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob⁵ said: "He who fulfils one precept (of the Torah) gains for himself one advocate,⁶ and he who commits one transgression (against the Torah) gains for himself one accuser.⁷ Repentance⁸ and good works are as a shield⁹ against punishment."¹⁰

¹ **R. Meir**: The greatest of R. Akiba's disciples; he lived during the middle portion of the second century A.D.

² **Be lowly of spirit**: *cp.* Matt. xi. 29; see verse 4.

³ **many idle things**: The idle mind is easily distracted by trifles, and therefore becomes unfit to concentrate itself on more serious thought. *AN* understands the reference to be "idle persons."

⁴ **He**: *i.e.* God.

⁵ **R. Eliezer b. J.**: He lived in the second half of the second century A.D.; a disciple of R. Akiba; another of the same name, a disciple of R. Jochanan b. Zakkai, lived a little earlier.

⁶ **advocate**: שׂוֹמֵר = παράκλητος, a Johannine word; *cp.* John xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7; 1 John ii. 1.

⁷ **accuser**: קַטְגֹּר = κατηγορος; *cp.* Rev. xii. 10.

⁸ **Repentance** . . . : *cp.* verse 22. The teaching on repentance (*Teshubah*) occupies a prominent position in Rabbinical writings; it is very often coupled with good works, one implying the other. Thus it is said in the Talmud that three books are opened on New Year's Day: the righteous are inscribed, in one of these, for life; the wicked, in another, for death; while the intermediate, those who are neither good nor bad, remain in suspense until the Day of Atonement. By repentance and good works they can make the swaying balance incline in their favour (*Rosh ha-Shana* 17 b, *Yebamoth* 105 a). In the Midrash, *Shemoth Rabba* xii. 4, it is said: "God says, My hands are stretched towards the penitent; I thrust no one back who gives Me his heart in repentance." In another Midrash, *Shir Rabba* v. 2, it is said: "Open for Me a gateway of repentance as big as a needle's eye, and I will open for you gates wide enough for chariots and horses" (*cp.* Matt. xix. 24; Luke v. 32).

⁹ **shield**: תָּרִים = θυρεός; *cp.* Eph. vi. 16.

¹⁰ **punishment**: שְׂוִיָּעוּת, used mostly of divine retribution; a non-Biblical word.

14. (16) Rabbi Jochanan¹ the Sandal-maker said: "Every assembly² that (meets) in the name of Heaven³ shall in the end be established; and every (assembly) that (meets) not in the name of Heaven shall in the end not be established."
15. (17) Rabbi Eleazar⁴ said: "Let the honour of thy disciple be as dear to thee as the honour of thy associate,⁵ and the honour of thy associate as the reverence for thy teacher, and the reverence for thy teacher as the fear of Heaven."
16. (18) Rabbi Jehudah⁶ said: "Be careful in the study (of the Torah), for error in the study⁷ (of the Talmud) amounts to sin."⁸

¹ **R. Jochanan . . .**: He lived in the middle of the second century A.D.; a native of Alexandria, he became a disciple of R. Akiba. His worldly occupation, combined with Torah-study, recalls the word of Rabbi Gamliel in ii. 2; *cp.* St. Paul's Torah-study (Acts xxii. 3) with his worldly occupation (Acts xviii. 3). The sandal-maker (רַבֵּי הַסַּנְדָּלִים = *σανδαλῆριος*) was quite distinct from the shoemaker (רַבֵּי הַנְּעָמִים); both callings were held in respect, and several Rabbis are mentioned as having combined them with their Torah-study. See further Krauss, i. pp. 176 f., 619.

² **assembly**: כְּנִיסָה (*Kenisah*); though used of assemblies in general, especially in the Targums, the word is mostly applied to religious meetings; the regular name for a synagogue is בֵּית הַכְּנִסָּה (*beth ha-Keneseth*), "house of meeting."

³ **Heaven**: One MS. and *AV* 40 read מִצְוָה ("command" or "duty") each time.

⁴ **R. Eleazar**: Some authorities read "Eliezer"; one MS. adds "ben Shaminua." He was a disciple of R. Akiba, and lived during nearly the whole of the second century A.D.

⁵ **thy associate**: One MS. reads, wrongly, "as thine own"; *cp.* ii. 13.

⁶ **R. Jehudah**: Spoken elsewhere as "ben Illai"; he was a contemporary of R. Eleazar, and likewise a disciple of R. Akiba.

⁷ **in the study**: lit. "in the Talmud"; but this word, which means "learning," had, of course, not yet received the technical sense in which it has since been used, viz. as the combined Mishnah and Gemara (lit. "completion").

⁸ **amounts to sin**: chiefly because it may involve the handing on of erroneous teaching.

17. (19) Rabbi Simeon¹ said: "There are three crowns: the crown of Torah,² the crown of priesthood,³ and the crown of kingship;⁴ but the crown of a good name⁵ rises above them all."
18. (20) Rabbi Nehorai⁶ said: "Be a wanderer⁷ to a place of the Torah⁸—and say not that it shall come after thee⁹—for (it is) thy associates¹⁰ (who) will make it enduring¹¹ unto thee, 'and lean not upon thine own understanding.'"¹²

¹ **R. Simeon**: ben Jochai; see iii. 4.

² **the crown of Torah**: See Lev. xix. 32; *cp.* i. 13; iv. 7; Prov. iv. 9.

³ **the crown of priesthood**: *cp.* Lev. viii. 9; xxi. 8; I Pet. ii. 9.

⁴ **the crown of kingship**: *cp.* Deut. xvii. 15.

⁵ **the crown of a good name**: *cp.* Prov. xxii. 1; Eccles. vii. 1; and especially Sir. xli. 12, 13: "Be in fear of thy name, for that abideth longer for thee than thousands of treasures of wisdom; life's goods (last) for limited days, but the reward of a name for days without number" (Hebrew).

⁶ **R. Nehorai**: He lived probably during the second half of the second century A.D.; he is rarely mentioned, and practically nothing is known of him.

⁷ **Be a wanderer . . .**: *i.e.* if in your own home there is no Torah-teaching. The word נָס means to go into captivity, the root signification being "to be uncovered," and thus it is used of a land being made bare of its inhabitants; then in an extended use of leaving home, or going into exile.

⁸ **a place of the Torah**: *i.e.* a place where the Torah is taught.

⁹ **and say not . . . thee**: These words are parenthetic; the meaning is that if a man lives in a place where there is no Torah taught and should therefore wander forth in search of such a place, he must do this because the Torah (*i.e.* those who can teach it) will not come to him.

¹⁰ **for (it is) thy associates . . .**: *i.e.* it is by studying in company with others (*cp.* i. 6) that the intricacies of the Torah are examined and understood, and this is what makes it of enduring value to its devotees.

¹¹ **will make it enduring**: The root עָמַד is used of such things as an enduring name, a vow that is permanently valid, or of the decrees of Moses, which endure for ever.

¹² **and lean . . .**: Quoted from Prov. iii. 5.

19. (21) Rabbi Jannai¹ said: "We are unable to explain² either the prosperity of the wicked or the afflictions of the righteous."
20. (22) Rabbi Mathiah ben Charash³ said: "Be first in greeting⁴ every man"; and "Be a tail to lions, and not a head to foxes."⁵
21. (23) Rabbi Jacob⁶ said: "This world is like the vestibule⁷ of the world to come;⁸ prepare thyself in the vestibule that thou mayest enter into the banqueting-hall."⁹
- 22.¹⁰ (24) He used to say: "Better is one hour (spent) in repentance

¹ **R. Jannai**: *cf.* iii. 10 and notes; though it is possible that this Jannai is not the father of R. Dosthai, who lived early in the second century, but the *Amora* ("Interpreter" of the Law) of the same name who lived a century or so later. Scholars vary on the point.

² **We are unable to explain**: lit. "(it is) not in our hand"; the saying might mean: "We are not responsible for, etc."; but the rendering given above is probably correct. Hoffmann aptly quotes the phrase from T.B. *Chullin* 13 a: "וְנִדְרֵי אֵלֵינוּ", "this is known to us," lit. "this is in our hands."

³ **R. Mathiah b. C.**: The spelling varies in the MSS.; for Charash *cf.* I Chron. ix. 15 (Cheresh). He lived in Rome during the early and middle parts of the second century A.D.

⁴ **in greeting**: lit. "to peace"; *cf.* Matt. x. 13; Luke x. 5; etc.

⁵ **Be a tail . . .**: *i.e.* Be a follower of wise men, not a leader of mischievous rogues. In the Jerusalem Talmud (*Sanhedrin* iv. 22 b) we are told of a Rabbi who reversed this saying, *viz.* "Be a head to foxes, and not a tail to lions"; either maxim is *à propos*, according to circumstances.

⁶ **R. Jacob**: He lived in the second half of the second century A.D.

⁷ **the vestibule**: פְּרוּרֵי, formed from the gen. of ἡ προστάς (*προστά-δος*). Another reading is פְּרוּרֵי = πρόθυρον ("porch").

⁸ **the world to come**: See note on ii. 7.

⁹ **the banqueting-hall**: מִדְּבַרֵּי = τράκλιος; see note on iii. 23; *cf.* Luke xxiv. 30.

¹⁰ This paradoxical saying may be paraphrased thus: A man can only in this world prepare himself for the world to come by means of repentance and good works; so that if it were not for this world, there could, for him, be no question of the world to come; nevertheless, as compared with the happiness of the world to come, this world is as nothing.

and good works¹ in this world than all of the life in the world to come ; (yet) better is one hour of refreshment of spirit in the world to come than all the life of this world."

23. (25) Rabbi Simeon ben Eleazar² said : "Seek not to pacify³ thy associate in the hour of his wrath ; nor to comfort him when his dead (friend) is laid out before him ; nor question him⁴ at the time of his (making a) vow ; nor strive to see him in the hour of his disgrace."⁵
24. (26) Samuel the Small⁶ said : "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thy heart be glad when he stumbleth, lest the Lord see it, and it is evil in His eyes, and He turn away His wrath from him."⁷
25. (27) Elisha ben Abujah⁸ said : "He who learns as a lad, to

¹ **repentance and good works** : See note on verse 13.

² **R. Simeon b. E.** : He lived during the latter part of the second, and early part of the third, century A.D. His father was the Eleazar mentioned in verse 15. He was a disciple of R. Meir.

³ **Seek not to pacify** : This is the force of the form of the verb here used (הִפָּקֵחַ).

⁴ **nor question him . . .** : *i.e.* as to whether he is wise in making the vow ; or else as to whether he will be able to keep it.

⁵ **disgrace** : or "humiliation," "dishonour" ; whether through his own fault or that of others.

⁶ **Samuel the Small** : So called on account of his humility ; he lived during the first century A.D. ; see further on him Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, pp. 127-135.

⁷ **Rejoice not . . .** : Quoted from Prov. xxiv. 17, 18. The MSS. vary slightly.

⁸ **Elisha b. A.** : He lived at the end of the first, and during the first half of the second, century A.D. ; the teacher of R. Meir. A strange but interesting personality, he was at first ardent and orthodox, but later he developed heretical views ; in what particular direction his heterodoxy tended is uncertain ; scholars differ on the subject, some believing that he became a Gnostic, others that he was a follower of Philo, while yet others hold that he became a Christian. Although honoured by the Rabbis for his learning, they regarded him with horror, and he is generally referred to as *dabar acher*, "the other thing" ; see further L. Ginzberg in *JE* v. 138 ff.

what is he like?¹ (He is like) unto ink² written on new paper.³ And he who learns when old, to what is he like? (He is like) unto ink written on paper which has been rubbed."⁴

26. (28) Rabbi Jose⁵ ben Jehudah of Kephah ha-Babli⁶ said: "He who learns from the young, to what is he like? (He is like) unto one that eats unripe grapes,⁷ and drinks wine out of his vat.⁸ And he who learns from the old, to what is he like? (He is like) unto one that eats ripe grapes,⁹ and drinks old wine."
27. (29) Rabbi¹⁰ said: "Regard not the pitcher, but what is therein; there is a new pitcher full of old (wine), and there is an old (pitcher) in which there is not even new (wine)."¹¹

¹ to what . . . : For the phrase *cp.* iii. 25.

² ink: דָּבַח (*dəjo*); *cp.* Jer. xxxvi. 18, from the root דָּבַח, "to flow slowly"; it was made by mixing soot (gained by burning olive-oil and letting it smoke on to glass, which was then scraped) with a little oil; this was then left in the sun to dry; when the resulting hard black substance was required for writing it was moistened with a little olive-oil, and so became slightly fluid. See further Krauss, iii. 148 f.

³ paper: נֶזְרָה (*nəjar*), lit. "fibre," of which this "paper" was manufactured; not papyrus, as Krauss has shown (iii. 146 f.).

⁴ paper which has been rubbed: מִדָּבַח; *cp.* the use of the word in *Shabbath* vii. 2: "... he who rubs out in order to write over the erasure" (Jastrow). Taylor refers to *AN* xxiii. saying: "Learning in youth is also likened to graving upon stone, and learning in old age to tracing characters upon the sand."

⁶ R. Jose . . . : He lived during the second half of the second, and early part of the third, century.

⁶ Kephah ha-Babli: A village in Galilee.

⁷ unripe grapes: *cp.* Ezek. xviii. 2.

⁸ wine out of his vat: *i.e.* wine not yet forty days old; *cp.* *Eduyoth* vi. 1, where it is said that wine must have been in the vat for at least forty days before it could be used for the altar as a libation.

⁹ ripe grapes: *cp.* Joel iv. 13.

¹⁰ Rabbi: See note on ii. 1.

¹¹ Regard not . . . : In contrast to the preceding saying, this one teaches that it is not the age of a teacher, but how much he knows, that matters.

28. (30) Rabbi Eleazar¹ ha-Kappar² said: "Jealousy, and lust, and ambition drive a man³ out of the world."
29. (31) He used to say: "Those who are born⁴ (are destined) to die, and those who are dead to live again,⁵ and those who live (after death)⁶ to be judged; that one may know,⁷ and make known, and that it be known, that God, He is the framer, He is the creator, He is the discerner,⁸ He is the judge, He is the witness, He is the accuser;⁹ and that He shall judge in the hereafter,¹⁰ before whom there is no wrong-doing and no forgetting, and no respect of persons, and no taking of bribes,¹¹ for all is His. And (32) know that all is according to reckoning.¹² And let not

¹ **R. Eleazar**: The MSS. vary, Eliezer, Liezer. He was a contemporary of "Rabbi."

² **ha-Kappar**: Meaning uncertain, perhaps "dealer in asphalt."

³ **drive a man . . .**: *cf.* ii. 14.

⁴ **born**: *AN* "formed."

⁵ **to live again**: This is probably the best way to render the causative form of the verb here (לְחַיֶּה); two MSS. read לְחַיֶּה, "to live"; but the other reading, though more difficult grammatically, is more expressive.

⁶ **who live (after death)**: *i.e.* the risen.

⁷ **that one may know . . .**: *i.e.* that one may know from others, that one may make others know, and thus that it will be universally known that He is God, etc. In Hebrew this is expressed far more succinctly in three words: לִידַע לְהוֹדִיעַ וְלִתְּרַע. "Truths which in this world men are taught and then teach others 'will in the world to come be known of themselves without a teacher,' according to the prophetic description of the coming age: 'And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord' (Jer. xxxi. 34); *cf.* 1 Cor. xiii. 12" (Taylor).

⁸ **discerner**: See Ps. xxxiii. 15 (Hebrew).

⁹ **accuser**: בַּעַל דִּין, lit. "Lord of judgement" = accuser.

¹⁰ **in the hereafter**: עָתִיד, a word expressive of the future; some MSS. add "Blessed be He!"

¹¹ **before whom . . . bribes**: *cf.* 2 Chron. xix. 7. **no wrong-doing and no forgetting**: Two MSS. omit.

¹² **. . . reckoning**: הַשְׂבִּיב, *cf.* Eccles. vii. 27; and see iii. 23 above.

thy (evil) imagination¹ persuade thee² that in Sheol there is a place of refuge;³ for without thy will⁴ thou wast formed,⁵ and without thy will thou wast born, and without thy will thou livest, and without thy will thou diest, and without thy will thou shalt give an account⁶ and a reckoning before the King of the kings of kings,⁷ the Holy One—Blessed be He!⁸

CHAPTER V 9

I. (I) BY ten sayings¹⁰ was the world created. And what does the Scripture¹¹ teach (regarding this)? For could it not

¹ (evil) imagination: *Yetzer*; see note on ii. 14.

² persuade thee: lit. "cause thee to trust."

³ a place of refuge: lit. "a house of refuge"; *AN* "a house of rest."

⁴ without thy will: כּוּץ means "to force"; and the adverb usually means "against one's will"; but it is also used in the sense of "without one's will," which is often, as in the passage before us, more to the point.

⁵ thou wast formed: *cp.* Jer. xviii. 5, 6.

⁶ an account: *AN* omits.

⁷ King of the kings of kings: This expression occurs in verse 14 of the *Psalm of Thanksgiving* after Sir. li. 12, as found in the recently discovered Hebrew portions of the book: "Give thanks unto the King of the kings of kings: for His mercy endureth for ever."

⁸ Blessed be He: *cp.* Rom. i. 5; ix. 5; 2 Cor. xi. 31.

⁹ The sayings in this chapter are anonymous as far as v. 22; see further Introduction, § 1.

¹⁰ By ten sayings: For this idea of tabulating various things by number, *cp. e.g.* Prov. vi. 16: "There are six things which the Lord hateth; yea, seven which are an abomination unto Him . . ." The world, as Taylor points out, is described as created by "sayings," because in Genesis the acts of creation begin by: "and God said"; *cp.* Ps. xxxiii. 9.

¹¹ what does the Scripture: This is the meaning, but not a translation, of the oft-recurring phrase: ומדהלמוד לומר; it cannot be adequately rendered in English.

have been created by one saying? But (that it was created by ten sayings was) to punish¹ the wicked who destroy the world that was created by ten sayings; and to give a goodly reward to the righteous who uphold the world that was created by ten sayings.²

2. (2) Ten generations (there were) from Adam to Noah,³ in order to show⁴ how great was His longsuffering; for all generations continued provoking Him⁵ until He brought upon them the waters of the Flood.
3. (3) Ten generations (there were) from Noah to Abraham,⁶ in order to show how great was His longsuffering; for all generations continued provoking Him until Abraham our father⁷ came and received the reward of them all.⁸
4. (4) With ten temptations⁹ was Abraham our father tempted,

¹ **to punish**: lit. "that vengeance might be taken upon"; this is the force of the form of the verb used.

² **But (that it was . . .)** . . . : The meaning is that since the importance of God's work of creation was enhanced by the fact that it was created by ten sayings instead of one, therefore the sin is proportionately greater on the part of those who by their wickedness destroy this beautiful work; while, on the other hand, the reward is proportionately greater for those who by their goodness uphold the world. It is interesting to notice in this passage the implied relationship between ethical and cosmic processes; *cf.* Rom. viii. 19-23.

³ **from Adam to Noah**: viz. Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah (Gen. v. 1-31).

⁴ **to show . . .**: *cf.* 1 Pet. iii. 20.

⁵ **continued provoking Him**: For the form of the phrase (מְכַעֲסֵין לַפָּנִים) *cf.* . . . ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, Luke xv. 18; this form of expression is used in order to avoid as far as possible the anthropomorphic thought of God's anger with these people (Fiebig). With the passage generally *cf.* 2 Pet. iii. 5, 6.

⁶ . . . **from Noah to Abraham**: viz. Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, Abraham (Gen. xi. 10-26).

⁷ **Abraham our father**: *cf.* Matt. iii. 9; John viii. 53; Rom. iv. 1.

⁸ **received the reward of them all**: *i.e.* the reward that all of them together would have received, had they been righteous.

⁹ **With ten temptations . . .**: These were, according to Maimonides: (1) Leaving his native place (Gen. xii. 1-5); (2) the famine in

and he withstood them all; to show how great was the love of Abraham¹ our father.

5. (5) Ten wonders² were wrought for our fathers in Egypt, and ten by the sea.³
6. (7) With ten⁴ temptations did our fathers tempt God⁵ in the wilderness, as it is said: "And they tempted⁶ Me these ten times and have not hearkened unto My voice."
7. (8) Ten wonders⁷ were wrought for our fathers in the Sanctuary:
 - (i) No woman miscarried from the smell of the holy meat;
 - (ii) and the holy meat never stank;
 - (iii) and no uncleanness befell the high-priest on the Day of Atonement;

the land of Canaan (xii. 10); (3) Sarah in Pharaoh's house (xii. 14 ff.); (4) the battle with the four kings (xiv. 14 ff.); (5) Abraham's union with Hagar (xvi. 2); (6) the covenant of circumcision (xvii. 9, 10); (7) Sarah and Abimelech (xx. 2 ff.); (8) the casting-out of Hagar (xxi. 10); (9) the repudiation of Ishmael (xxi. 10); (10) the offering-up of Isaac (xxii. 9, 10); see further Hoffmann and Taylor *in loc.*

¹ **the love of Abraham**: *i.e.* for God; *cf.* Is. xli. 8; 2 Chron. xx. 7; James ii. 23.

² **Ten wonders . . .**: *i.e.* the ten plagues. The word for "wonder" here is עֵשֶׂה, lit. "an ensign" in Biblical Hebrew; it means a sign, in the sense of a wonder, in neo-Hebrew.

³ **ten by the sea**: There are quaint legends about these in ancient Rabbinical writings, viz. *AN* xxxiii. 2; Midrash *Mechilta* on Exod. xv. 8; *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* xlii.; and in Maimonides; see Hoffmann and Taylor *in loc.* At the end of this verse this later addition is inserted: "Ten plagues did the Holy One—Blessed be He!—bring upon the Egyptians in Egypt, and ten by the sea."

⁴ **With ten . . .**: viz. according to Maimonides: (1) At the Red Sea (Exod. xiv. 11); (2) in Marah (xv. 24); (3) in the wilderness of Sin (xvi. 2); (4) regarding the manna (xvi. 20); (5) the gathering of manna on the Sabbath (xvi. 27); (6) in Rephidim (xvii. 2); (7) the golden calf (xxxii. 1); (8) in Taberah (Num. xi. 1); (9) in Kibroth-hattaavah (xi. 4); (10) the murmuring against Moses and Aaron (xiv. 2 ff.) (Hoffmann).

⁵ **God**: "Makom"; see note on ii. 13.

⁶ **And they tempted**: Num. xiv. 22.

⁷ **Ten wonders . . .**: These offer a good example (of many) of the curious legends current among the Jews already in the early centuries of Christianity and preserved in various Rabbinical writings.

(iv) and no fly¹ was seen in the slaughter-house; (v) and no defect was found in the sheaf,² nor in the two loaves,³ nor in the shewbread;⁴ (vi) and rains quenched not the fire⁵ of the wood⁶ for the altar; (vii) and no wind prevailed against the pillar of smoke;⁷ (viii) (though) they stood⁸ pressed together (yet) they bowed down (to worship) at ease;⁹ (ix) and no serpent or scorpion harmed¹⁰ (any) in Jerusalem; (x) and no man said to his neighbour, "The place is too strait for me,"¹¹ that I may lodge¹² in Jerusalem.

8. (9) Ten things were created between the suns;¹³ and they are

¹ **fly**: *zebug*; *cp.* Matt. x. 25, etc.

² **sheaf**: '*omer*'; see Lev. xxiii. 10-14.

³ **the two loaves**: See Lev. xxiii. 17.

⁴ **the shewbread**: See Exod. xxv. 30; Lev. xxiv. 5-9.

⁵ **the fire**: Some MSS. omit.

⁶ **the wood**: המערכה, from ערך, "to lay in order"; the word is used technically of the pile of wood on the altar in the Temple; *cp.* Gen. xxii. 9; Lev. i. 7. The same word is used in a different connexion of soldiers in the battle-line (Jastrow).

⁷ **the pillar of smoke**: *i.e.* the smoke that rose up from sacrifice on the altar; it is said that this always ascended straight up and then spread out, "like a palm-tree," T.B. *Joma* 21 b (Hoffmann).

⁸ **they stood**: *i.e.* the congregation.

⁹ **at ease**: lit. "extended," רחיים; the root = "to be wide," "roomy," and then "to be at ease."

¹⁰ **harmed**: It is from this root נקק that the word for "demons," *mazzikin*, is derived; see note on next verse.

¹¹ **The place . . .**: Is. xlix. 20.

¹² **that I may lodge**: לן means "to pass the night"; *cp.* Gen. xxxii. 22.

¹³ **. . . created between the suns**: See the almost identical words of this saying in *Pirke de R. Eliezer* xviii. These ten very special things, as well as the additional things mentioned at the end of the verse, are not spoken of as having been created on any of the six days of the Creation, and on the Sabbath day they could not have been created, so the Rabbis got over the difficulty by saying that they were created in the twilight ("between the suns"); after sunset on the last day of Creation, and before the rising of the Sabbath sun. The traditional explanation is that at the moment between the end of

these : (i) The mouth of the earth ;¹ (ii) and the (mouth of the) well ; (iii) and the mouth of the she-ass ; (iv) and

Creation and the beginning of the Sabbath God implanted in the powers of Nature the capability of producing all these things when the time should have arrived at which they would be required.

¹ **the mouth of the earth** : See Num. xvi. 32 : “. . . and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up . . .” That this was regarded by the Rabbis as a special creation is well brought out by the paraphrase in the *Targum of Onkelos* on Num. xvi. 28 ff. : “And Moses said, By this shall ye know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works, and that I have not done them from the thoughts of my heart . . . But if a death which hath not been created since the days of the world be now created for them, and if a mouth for the earth, which hath not been made from the beginning, be created now, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them, and all that they have, and go down alive into Sheol, you will understand that these men have provoked the Lord to anger.”—Our passage speaks next of “the mouth of the well.” There is an ancient Jewish legend which says that for Miriam’s sake (the sister of Moses) a marvellous well accompanied the Israelites ; it was a rock which contained this well, and which followed the Israelites wherever they went. In the *Targum of Onkelos* on Num. xxi. 16–18 (which contains the “Song of the Well”) it is said : “And from thence (*i.e.* from *Beer*, which means ‘a well’) was given to them the living well, the well concerning which the Lord said to Moses, Assemble the people and give them water. Then, behold, Israel sang the thanksgiving of this song, at the time that the well which had been hidden was restored to them, through the merit of Miriam . . .” ; further, in the *Midrash Rabba* on Num. i. 1, which, though of much later date, contains many ancient elements, it says that the Israelites had a well “through the merit of Miriam,” and it is described thus : “It was a crag like a bee-hive, and it used to roll along and accompany them on their journeyings. And when the standards were pitched, and the Tabernacle rested, the crag came and settled in the court of the tent of meeting, and the princes came and stood beside it, and said, ‘Spring up, O well,’ and then it would spring up” (*cf.* Num. xxi. 17, 18). It is this ancient legend that St. Paul utilises when he says in 1 Cor. x. 1–4 : “. . . for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them ; and that rock was Christ.” In our passage it is the mouth of this well which is referred to.—Then it speaks of “the mouth of the she-ass” ; that is, of course, a reference to Num. xxii. 28 : “And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass.” It is interesting to note in passing that, in the *Targum of Onkelos* on this passage, the verse from *Pirke Aboth* with which we are dealing is

the (rain-)bow ; (v) and the manna ; (vi) and the rod ; (vii) and Shamir ; (viii) and the form of writing ; (ix) and the manner of writing ;¹ (x) and the Tables.² And there are those who say, in addition to these, the Demons,³

inserted in the text, though the ten things differ slightly in this text.—Then, the rainbow, the manna, and the rod (of Moses) (*cp.* Gen. ix. 13 ; Exod. xvi. 15 ; Exod. iv. 17) are spoken of ; these require no comment. But the next thing, Shamir, demands a little notice. In Exod. xx. 25 the prohibition is uttered : “ If thou make Me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stones ; for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it ” (*cp.* Deut. xxvii. 6 ; Josh. viii. 31). The reason for this prohibition was because altars were originally pieces of rough stone or rock in which a deity was believed to have taken up his abode ; its holiness was derived, not from the fact that a god was already in it, but because he had consented to take up his abode in the stone or rock which had been previously chosen for him. But it was not permitted to change the *natural form* of such stone in any way, for it was believed that in that case the god would look upon it as having been polluted.* The idea is a very primitive one, but it crops up now and again in the Old Testament ; it lies at the root of what we read in 1 Kings vi. 7 about the building of Solomon’s temple : “ And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready at the quarry, and there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building.” In later days, when the love of the marvellous grew, it was said that Solomon had been able to dispense with iron for hewing the stones into shape for his temple, because he had discovered a wonderful worm, called *Shamir*, which had the power of splitting stones and rocks. The word is used of a “ diamond ” and “ flint ” ; in T.B. *Gittin* 68 a, it is said that Moses used *Shamir* for cutting the jewels of the Ephod (Jastrow) ; see further Cassel, *Schamir, ein archäologischer Beitrag zur Natur- und Sagenkunde*.

¹ **the form of writing and the manner.** . . . : הַתָּבִיב וְהַמִּקְרָב ; the former refers to the single letters, the latter to their combination in writing, *i.e.* sentences.

² **the Tables** : See Exod. xxiv. 12, etc.

³ **the Demons** : *Mazzikin* = “ the harmful ones,” as the root im-

* The reason given in the Mishnah (*Middoth* iii. 4), that iron is used ‘to shorten life, the altar to prolong it, and that it would therefore be unfitting to use iron for the building of an altar, is, of course, nonsense in view of the fact that there was a brazen altar in Solomon’s temple (1 Kings viii. 64).

and the sepulchre of Moses,¹ and the ram of Abraham² our father. And there are those who say, in addition to these, the tongs,³ made with tongs.

9. (10) Seven things (there are) in an ignorant man,⁴ and seven in a wise man. (i) A wise man speaks not in the presence of one who is greater than he in wisdom; (ii) and does not break in when his associate speaks;⁵ (iii) and is not hasty in returning answer; (iv) he asks according to rule,⁶ and answers to the point; (v) and he speaks about the first (point) first, and on the last (one) last; (vi) and of what he has not heard he says: "I have not heard"; (vii) and he acknowledges the truth. And their opposites are in the ignorant man.

10. (11) Seven kinds of punishment come upon the world⁷ for seven categories of transgression: (i) When part (of the people) give tithes and part do not give tithes, famine from drought comes; some are hungry and some have enough. (ii) When they have not given tithes at all,⁸ dearth from

plies; this is the most general term for them, though various other grades of them are mentioned in the Talmud and kindred writings: *shedim* = "evil genii," an Assyrio-Bab. loan-word; *lilin*, probably evil spirits of the night, also from the Assyrio-Bab.; and *ruchin* = "spirits"; on the whole subject of the Jewish belief in demons see Blau, *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen*.

¹ **the sepulchre of Moses**: *cp.* Deut. xxxiv. 4; two authorities add "our master."

² **the ram of Abraham**: *cp.* Gen. xxii. 13.

³ **the tongs . . .**: Strack refers to T.B. *Pesachim* 54a: "One pair of tongs is made with another. But who made the first pair?" *i.e.* it must have been created by God.

⁴ **an ignorant man**: עֲבָרָה, lit. "an unformed mass," and so of an uncultured man; in Ps. cxxxix. 16 the word is used of the babe unborn.

⁵ **when his associate speaks**: lit. "in the midst of the words of his associate."

⁶ **rule**: *halakah*; see note on iii. 26. Another reading has the sense that "his questions are such as are really relevant."

⁷ **upon the world**: Some authorities omit.

⁸ **When they have not . . . at all**: lit. "When they have completed not to give . . ." from root נָמַר; see note on p. 54.

- tumult¹ [and from drought] comes. (iii) And when they have not offered the dough² an all-consuming³ death (12) comes. (iv) Pestilence comes into the world for crimes worthy of death⁴ recorded in the Law (Torah) which are not brought before the tribunal,⁵ and because of the (13) seventh-year fruits.⁶ (v) The sword comes upon the world because of the postponement⁷ of justice⁸ and for the perversion⁹ of justice;⁸ and because of those who explain the Torah not according to the right way.¹⁰ (14) (vi) Noisome beasts come into the world because of false swearing and because of the profanation of the Name.¹¹ (vii) Exile comes upon the world because of those who offer strange worship,¹² and because of incest, and because of the shedding of blood, and because of the "release"¹³ of the land.

II. (15) At four periods the pestilence increases: (i) In the fourth (year), (ii) and in the seventh (year), (iii) and at the

¹ **tumult**: The reference is to war.

² **the dough**: of which the "cake for the heave-offering" was made; see Num. xv. 20.

³ **all-consuming**: נלית = "extinction"; the root נלה = "to cease," "finish."

⁴ **crimes worthy of death**: מיתה; the word מיתה means "death penalty"; but here the "crimes" for which this is inflicted is understood.

⁵ **the tribunal**: בית דין, lit. "the house of judgement."

⁶ **because of the . . . fruits**: *i.e.* if these are used for merchandise instead of being treated as holy according to the commandment; see Exod. xxiii. 10, 11; Lev. xxv. 1-7.

⁷ **postponement**: עיניי, from the root ענה II.

⁸ **justice**: דין, lit. "judgement," in each case.

⁹ **perversion**: עוות, a noun from עוות; *cp.* Job viii. 3: "Doth God pervert (עוות) judgement . . .?"

¹⁰ **the right way**: *halakah*; see note on iii. 26; *i.e.* forbidding that which is allowed, and allowing that which is forbidden.

¹¹ **profanation of the Name**: See note on iv. 5.

¹² **strange worship**: *Abodah Zarah*, *i.e.* idolatry.

¹³ **"release"**: *Shemitta*; the reference is to the neglect of the laws concerning land in the Sabbatical year and in the year of jubilee; see Lev. xxvi. 34 f.

ending¹ of the seventh (year), (iv) and at the ending of the feast² in every year. In the fourth (year) because of the tithe of the poor³ in the third (year); in the seventh (year) because of the tithe of the poor in the sixth (year);⁴ and at the ending of the seventh (year) because of the fruits⁵ of the seventh (year); and at the ending of the feast in every year because of the robbery of the gifts⁶ of the poor.

- (16) (There are) four types of character⁷ in men: (i) He who says: "Mine is mine, and thine is thine," that is a moderate⁸ type—some say it is the Sodom type⁹ of character; (ii) (he who says): "Mine is thine, and thine is mine," (that is what the) *'am ha-aretz*¹⁰ (say); (iii) (he who says): "Mine is thine, and thine is thine," (that is what the) *Chasid*¹¹ (says); (iv) (he who says): "Thine is mine, and mine is mine," (that is what the) wicked man (says).

¹ at the ending: lit. "in the goings-out."

² the feast: *i.e.* *Succoth*, the feast of Tabernacles; the "feast of ngathering" (Exod. xxiii. 16).

³ the tithe of the poor . . . : on account of its not having been paid; see Deut. xiv. 28.

⁴ in the seventh . . . sixth: The tithe for the poor had to be paid in the third and sixth years in the seven-year cycle.

⁵ because of the fruits . . . : *i.e.* on account of neglecting to "release" the fruits in the preceding year; see Exod. xxiii. 10, 11.

⁶ the robbery of the gifts . . . : The reference is to neglect of the commands given in Lev. xix. 9; Deut. xxiv. 19.

⁷ types of character: *Middoth* = lit. "measures" in Bibl. Hebrew; in neo-Hebrew the word has a wide signification, "manner," "quality," "kind," etc.

⁸ moderate: lit. "between," "intermediate"; *i.e.* neither good nor bad.

⁹ Sodom type: "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, fullness of bread, and prosperous ease was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy" (Ezek. xvi. 49).

¹⁰ *'am ha-aretz*: See note on ii. 6.

¹¹ *Chasid*: See note on ii. 6.

- 13.¹ (17) (There are) four types of character regarding disposition:²
 (i) (He who is) easily provoked and easily pacified; his loss is cancelled by his gain.³ (ii) (He who is) hard to provoke and hard to pacify; his gain is cancelled by his loss.³ (iii) (He who is) hard to provoke and easily pacified; (he is) a *Chasid*. (iv) (He who is) easily provoked and hard to pacify; (he is) a wicked man.
14. (18) (There are) four types of character in scholars: (i) (He who is) quick to hear and quick to forget; his gain is cancelled by his loss. (ii) (He who is) slow to hear and slow to forget; his loss is cancelled by his gain. (iii) (He who is) quick to hear and slow to forget; (he is) a wise man. (iv) (He who is) slow to hear and quick to forget; such a man (has) a sad⁴ lot.
15. (19) (There are) four types of character among those who give alms:⁵ (i) He who is willing to give himself, but not that others⁶ should give; his eye⁷ is evil towards that which belongs to others. (ii) (He who is willing) that others should give, while he (himself) gives not; his eye is evil towards his own (belongings). (iii) He who gives and (is willing that) others should give; (he is) a *Chasid*. (iv) He who gives not, nor (desires) others to give; (he is) an evil man.

¹ Some authorities place this verse after verse 14.

² **disposition**: or "temperament"; plur. in Hebr.; דַּבָּר = lit. "knowledge," then a man's view of, or attitude towards, things, and so his general disposition, or habit of life.

³ **his loss . . . gain**: "A various reading interchanges the words 'loss' and 'gain,' and thus reverses the estimates of the first and second tempers" (Taylor).

⁴ **sad**: lit. "evil."

⁵ **alms**: lit. "righteousness" (*zedakah*); almsgiving is righteousness *par excellence*.

⁶ **but not that others . . .**: *i.e.* he alone wants to have the credit.

⁷ **his eye . . .**: *i.e.* he is envious of others because they have the wherewithal to give alms.

16. (20) (There are) four types of character among those who frequent the house of learning:¹ (i) He who goes (there), but does not practise;² the reward³ of his going is in his hand. (ii) He who practises, but does not go; the reward of his practice is in his hand.⁴ (iii) He who goes and practises; (he is) a *Chasid*. (iv) He who neither goes nor practises; (he is) an evil man.
17. (21) (There are) four types of character among those who sit⁵ in the presence of the wise: a sponge,⁶ and a funnel, a strainer, and a sieve.⁷ A sponge (is he) who sucks up all; a funnel (is he) who takes in on one side and lets out on the other; a strainer (is he) who lets out the wine and retains the dregs; a sieve (is he) who lets out the coarse meal and retains the fine flour.
18. (22) All love that depends on a transient thing⁸—(of such it may be said), when the thing has ceased, the love ceases (too); but (the love) that depends not on a transient (23) thing never ceases. What is that love which depends on a transient thing? The love of Amnon and Tamar.⁹

¹ the house of learning: *Beth ha-Midrash*. One MS. omits "house of."

² does not practise: *i.e.* what he learns there.

³ the reward . . . : *i.e.* his reward corresponds with his action; for the thought *cp.* Matt. x. 41.

⁴ He who practises, but . . . his hand: Two MSS. omit.

⁵ those who sit . . . : See note on i. 4.

⁶ a sponge: ספוג = σπόγγος; *cp.* Matt. xxvii. 48.

⁷ a sieve: *cp.* Is. xxx. 28; it was made of coarse hair, and used for sifting flour from the husks. But from the words which follow at the end of the saying: ". . . who lets out the coarse meal and retains the fine flour," it is obvious that a sieve in the ordinary sense of the word cannot be intended here, since this would retain the coarse meal and let out the fine flour. The word rendered "sieve," כסא, is used in the Talmud, among other things, of a small "basket" in which women, whilst combing their hair, placed the hairs which fell out; see Krauss, i. 656. Probably some basket of this kind is meant.

⁸ a transient thing: This is the force of the word (דבר, lit. "thing") here.

⁹ Amnon and Tamar: See 2 Sam. xiii.

And (what love is) that which depends not on a transient thing? The love of David and Jonathan.

19. (24) Every controversy¹ which is for the name² of Heaven will in the end be profitable;³ and (every controversy) which is not for the name of Heaven will not in the end (25) be profitable. What is a controversy which is for the name of Heaven? The controversy of Shammai and Hillel.⁴ And (what is a controversy which is) not for the name of Heaven? The controversy of Korah⁵ and all his congregation.⁶
20. (26) Whosoever makes the many⁷ righteous, sin prevails not over him;⁸ and whosoever makes the many to sin, (27) they⁹ grant him not the power to repent.¹⁰ Moses was righteous¹¹ and made many righteous,¹¹ and the righteousness¹¹ of many depended on him, as it is said: "He executed the justice of the Lord, and his judgements with Israel."¹² Jerobeam sinned and made the many to sin, (and) the sin of the many depended on him, as it is said: "Because of the sins of Jerobeam who sinned and who made Israel to sin."¹³

¹ **controversy** : lit. "division" (of opinion).

² **for the name . . .** : The reference is to a discussion which has for its object the establishing of some divine truth ; it is thus intended to be for the honour and glory of God.

³ **profitable** : lit. "will have success," *i.e.* in so far as the knowledge of the truth is furthered by the discussion.

⁴ **Shammai and Hillel** : See note on i. 12. Some authorities read "Hillel and Shammai."

⁵ **Korah** : *cp.* Jude 11.

⁶ **and all his congregation** : Some authorities omit.

⁷ **the many . . .** : הרבים = *oi πολλοι* ; *cp.* Rom. v. 19.

⁸ **sin prevails not over him** : *cp.* James v. 19, 20.

⁹ **they** : *i.e.* God.

¹⁰ **to repent** : lit. "to do repentance."

¹¹ **righteous, made righteous, righteousness** : These all come from the root זָכָה (*Zakah*) ; on *Zecuth*, more strictly "merit," see note on ii. 2.

¹² **He executed the justice . . .** : Deut. xxxiii. 21 ; "justice" in the Hebrew of this passage is צְדָקָה ("righteousness") ; *cp.* Hebr. iii. 2 ff.

¹³ **Jerobeam . . . Israel to sin** : One MS. omits. **Because of . . .** : 1 Kings xiv. 6 ; xv. 30.

21. (28) In whomsoever there are three things, he¹ (belongs) to the disciples of² Abraham our father ;³ and in whomsoever⁴ these three things are not, he (belongs) to the (29) disciples of Bileam⁵ the wicked :⁶ a good eye, and a lowly soul, and a humble spirit (belong) to the disciples of Abraham our father ; an evil eye, an ambitious soul, and a haughty spirit (belong) to the disciples of Bileam the wicked. And what is (the difference) between the disciples of Abraham our father and the disciples of Bileam the wicked? The disciples of Bileam the wicked go down to Gehinnom,⁷ as it is said : “ But Thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction ; bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.”⁸ But the disciples of Abraham our father shall inherit the Garden of Eden, as it is said : “ That I may cause those that love Me to inherit substance, and that I may fill their treasuries.”⁹
22. (30) Jehuda ben Tema¹⁰ said : “ Be strong as a leopard, and swift as an eagle, and fleet as a hart, and courageous as a lion, to do the will of thy Father which is in Heaven.”¹¹

¹ **he** : In the plur. in Hebrew, הַלְלוּ = הָרַם and הַאֵלֶּה in the O.T. ; the sing. is הָלַל. One MS. omits ; another reads for it “ good,” *i.e.* “ three good things.”

² **the disciples of** : One MS. omits.

³ **our father** : Several authorities omit, both here and below.

⁴ **and in whomsoever . . .** : There are unimportant variations in the MSS. in the latter part of this saying.

⁵ **the disciples of Bileam** : *cf.* 2 Pet. ii. 15 ; Jude 11 ; Rev. ii. 14.

⁶ **the wicked** : Some authorities omit, both here and below.

⁷ **Gehinnom** : Some authorities have : “ inherit G.” and add : “ and go down to the pit of destruction.”

⁸ **But Thou . . .** : Is. lv. 24 (Hebr.) ; some authorities omit “ blood-thirsty . . . days.”

⁹ **That I may cause . . .** : Prov. viii. 21.

¹⁰ **Jehuda ben T.** : He lived probably during the second half of the second century A.D., or a little later. Some authorities prefix “ Rabbi.” He is mentioned in the Talmud as one learned in the Mishnah.

¹¹ **thy Father which is in Heaven** : *cf.* Matt. vi. 9, etc.

23.¹ (31) He used to say: "The fierce of countenance² for Gehinnom, and the modest of countenance³ for the Garden of Eden."

May it be well-pleasing in Thy sight, O Lord our God and God of our fathers,⁴ that Thy city be built⁵ in our days, and that Thou give⁶ (us) our portion in Thy Law, with them that do Thy will.

[24.⁷ He used to say: "At five years,⁸ the Scriptures;⁹ at ten, the Mishnah; at thirteen, the commandments;¹⁰ at fifteen, the Talmud;¹¹ at eighteen, marriage;¹² at twenty, the seeking (of sustenance for wife and child); at thirty, strength;¹³ at forty, discernment; at fifty, counsel; at sixty, mature age; at seventy, old

¹ *AN* omits this saying.

² **The fierce of countenance**: גַּז פָּנִים, Deut. xxviii. 50; *i.e.* such as are haughty and boastful.

³ **the modest of countenance**: גִּבּוֹשׁ פָּנִים, *i.e.* the humble-minded (lit. "shamefast of faces").

⁴ **and God of our fathers**: Some authorities omit.

⁵ **built**: One authority adds "quickly."

⁶ **and that Thou give . . .**: One MS. omits from here to the end of the saying.

⁷ This saying is omitted by several authorities; it is a later addition.

⁸ **At five years**: *i.e.* at this age the child is ripe for reading the Scriptures.

⁹ **the Scriptures**: *Mikra*, lit. "Reading," a technical word for the Bible; *cp.* the word *Koran*, with which it is radically connected.

¹⁰ **the commandments**: At thirteen years old a boy is made "Bar Mitzvah," lit. "a son of the commandment"; it is a ceremony corresponding to Confirmation in the modern Anglican Church, the Laying-on of hands being now divorced from Baptism; *cp.* Luke ii. 41 ff.

¹¹ **Talmud**: Here this word is used in the later sense in which we now understand it.

¹² **marriage**: *Chuppah* = the "canopy" under which the marriage ceremony is performed; *cp.* Ps. xix. 5 (Hebr.): "And he is like a bridegroom going forth from his *Chuppah*."

¹³ **strength**: Based on Num. iv. 3: ". . . from thirty years old and upward, even until fifty years, all that enter upon the service."

age ; at eighty, hoary age ;¹ at ninety, bending ; at a hundred, like one that is dead, and has passed and disappeared from the world.”]

25. (32) Ben Bag-Bag² said : “ Turn it,³ and turn it again ; and meditate therein ;⁴ for all things are in it. And look into it ;⁵ become grey and old in it ; and move not away⁶ from it ; there is no better guide⁷ for thee than this.”
- 26.⁸ (33) Ben He-He said : “ According to the labour, so is the reward.”

CHAPTER VI⁹

The Chapter on the Acquisition of the Torah¹⁰

1. WISE men have taught in the language of the Mishnah.
Blessed is He who chose them and their teaching !¹¹

¹ **hoary age** : *geburah* = lit. “ might ” ; here it means a “ mighty age ” ; *cp.* Ps. xc. 10, where the same expression occurs.

² **Ben Bag-Bag** : A fictitious name, like Ben He-He ; *AN* ascribes both sayings to Hillel.

³ **it** : lit. “ in it ” ; the reference is to the Torah.

⁴ **and meditate therein** : Some authorities omit.

⁵ **look into it** : *cp.* James i. 25.

⁶ **move not away** : מני is an Aramaic word.

⁷ **guide** : *middah*, lit. “ measure,” “ rule ” (of conduct) ; see note on v. 12.

⁸ This saying is in Aramaic ; *cp.* with it I Cor. iii. 8 : “ Each shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.” But in the saying here the reference is to the Torah. The treatise ends with this chapter.

⁹ On the place of this chapter in the tractate, see Introduction, § I.

¹⁰ **the Acquisition of the Torah** : The Hebrew is *Kinvan ha-Torah*, the name by which this chapter is known.

¹¹ **Wise men . . . teaching** : This is in the nature of a sub-title to the chapter. **teaching** : lit. *Mishnah*.

- (1) Rabbi Meir¹ said: "Whosoever is occupied in the Torah for its own sake merits many things; and not (only this), but he is worth the whole world besides. He is called the friend (of God), (he is) beloved (of God); he loves God,² he loves mankind; he pleases God, he pleases mankind;³ and it clothes him⁴ with humility and fear, and fits him to become righteous and pious,⁵ upright and faithful; and puts him far from sin, and brings him near to the side of merit.⁶ And they gain⁷ from him counsel and sound wisdom,⁸ discernment and strength; as it is said: 'Counsel is mine and sound wisdom, I am understanding, I have strength.'⁹ And it gives him¹⁰ a kingdom,¹¹ and dominion,¹² and discernment of judgement, and they reveal to him the secrets of Torah.¹³ And he is made like a well¹⁴ that ceases not, and like a river that grows ever mightier; and he becomes modest,¹⁵ and longsuffering, and forgiving of

¹ **R. Meir**: See note on iv. 12.

² **he loves God**: The word used is *Makom*; so, too, below: "he pleases God"; see ii. 13.

³ **he pleases . . . mankind**: One MS. omits. **mankind**: הבריות; see note on i. 12.

⁴ **it clothes him**: *i.e.* the Torah clothes him who is occupied in it for its own sake; *cp.* 1 Pet. v. 5: ". . . be clothed with humility."

⁵ **pious**: One MS. omits.

⁶ **side of merit**: lit. "hands of merit" (*Zecuth*; see note on ii. 2).

⁷ **they gain . . .**: *i.e.* his fellow-creatures.

⁸ **sound wisdom**: *tushiyyah*; *cp.* *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* iii.: ". . . at once the Lord took counsel with the Torah, whose name is *tushiyyah*, as to creating the world"; also in reference to Prov. viii. 14.

⁹ **Counsel is mine . . .**: Prov. viii. 14.

¹⁰ **And it gives him . . .**: *cp.* Prov. viii. 15 f.

¹¹ **a kingdom**: One MS. reads "life."

¹² **dominion**: Two MSS. read "great dominion."

¹³ **the secrets of Torah**: סֵת ("secret") means in the deepest "foundation," something that lies at the bottom of things; it = the Biblical *סֵת*, *e.g.* Ps. xxv. 14: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him."

¹⁴ **And he is made like a well . . .**: *cp.* John vii. 38: "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

¹⁵ **modest**: For the Hebrew word צַנִּיף *cp.* Micah vi. 8; Prov. xi. 2.

insult. And it magnifies him and exalts him over all things."

2. (2) Rabbi Jehoshua ben Levi¹ said: "Every day a Bath-Kol² goes forth from Mount Horeb, and makes proclamation, saying: 'Woe to you mankind that despise the Torah'; whosoever does not occupy himself with the Torah is called 'banned,'³ as it is said: 'As a golden nose-ring in a swine's snout is a fair woman without discretion.'⁴ And it says (elsewhere): 'And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables';⁵ read not⁶ *Charūth*, but *Chēruth*,⁷

¹ **R. Jehoshua b. L.:** He lived in the middle of the third century A.D. His home was in Lydda.

² **Bath-Kol:** lit. "daughter voice." This expression means a divine utterance audibly proclaimed; it is often spoken of in Rabbinical writings, and is said to have made itself heard in a variety of ways, sometimes being as loud as the roaring of a lion, at other times as soft as the voice of a dove. When a Bath-Kol speaks, according to Rabbinical teaching, it is always in few words, and these are generally taken from Scripture; and it is said that the Bath-Kol is the voice of the Holy Spirit (T.B. *Sotah* 33*a*, *Shobboth* 88*a*). With very few exceptions the Bath-Kol is always said to proceed from Heaven; *cp.* Matt. iii. 13-17; Mark ix. 1-11; Luke iii. 21, 22; and see also Matt. xvii. 5; Mark ix. 7; Luke ix. 35; John xii. 28-30; Acts ix. 3-7; x. 13, 16; Rev. x. 4; xiv. 13.

³ **banned:** The root נָחַ means "to reprimand," but the passive participle is generally used of being "placed under the ban" or "excommunicated." There is a play on the word here, viz. *nazūph*, "banned," and *nez(em be-)aph*, "a nose-ring in the snout."

⁴ **As a golden . . .:** Prov. xi. 22.

⁵ **And the tables . . .:** Exod. xxxii. 16. **graven:** חָרוּת, *Charuth*, from the root חָרַת.

⁶ **read not:** "The exegetical device אֵל תִּקְרֵי, 'Read not' so, but so, is often used in the Talmud when it is desired to attach a preconceived idea to a Scriptural expression by way of *μνημόσυλον*. The אֵל תִּקְרֵי is not to be taken as evidence that an actual various reading was current. The words to which it is prefixed are confessedly the true reading, with which the *darshan* ['interpreter'] makes free for a special purpose" (Taylor).

⁷ **Chēruth:** "freedom," from the root חָרַת II.; see note on ii. 19. It is obvious that the text was unpointed.

for thou wilt find no free-man but he is occupied with the learning of the Torah; and whosoever is occupied in the learning of the Torah, behold, such a one exalts himself, as it is said: 'And from Mattanah to Nachaliel, and from Nachaliel to Barnoth.'"¹

- 3.² (3) "He who learns from his associate one chapter,³ or one precept,⁴ or one verse,⁵ or only one letter,⁶ is bound⁷ to show him honour. For so we find it in David, king of Israel, who learned from Ahithophel only two things, and he called him⁸ his master,⁹ his teacher, and his friend; as it is said: 'But it was thou, a man mine equal, my teacher and my friend.'¹⁰ And is there not (here) an argument¹¹ from the less to the greater?¹² (Namely)

¹ **And from Mattanah . . .**: Num. xxi. 19. To the Hebrew reader this quotation is far more appropriate than appears at first sight, on account of the meaning of these proper names; lit. translated the quotation reads: "From a gift to a heritage of God, and from a heritage of God to the heights" (*i.e.* of Heaven).

² This presumably begins a new saying of R. Jehoshua, but the character of what follows belongs to a later period.

³ **one chapter . . .**: This shows that there was some definite division of the Biblical text into chapters, sections, and verses; what the original system was is not known; the only remains of it are the names of sections given to them from the opening words; this applies to the special lessons from the Pentateuch and the Prophetic books as arranged in the Synagogue services. The present chapter and verse divisions in the O.T. are of Christian origin. The Hebrew word for "chapter" is *perek* (properly "section"); for "verse," *pasuk* (from the root meaning "to divide").

⁴ **precept**: *halakah*; evidently this might comprise more than one verse.

⁵ **verse**: Two MSS. add: "or one saying," and so below.

⁶ **letter**: lit. "sign."

⁷ **is bound**: צריך means one who is under the necessity of doing something.

⁸ **he called him**: Some authorities: "and he made him," and so below.

⁹ **his master**: lit. "his Rabbi."

¹⁰ **But it was thou . . .**: Ps. lv. 14 (Hebr.).

¹¹ **argument**: lit. "words" or "things."

¹² **from the less to . . .**: The argument *a minori ad majus*; *cp.* Luke xi. 13; xii. 28; Rom. v. 17.

since David, king of Israel, who learned from Ahithophel only two things, made him his master, his teacher, and his friend, how much more¹ is he who learns from his associate one chapter, or one precept, or one verse, or only one letter, bound to show him honour! And (by) 'honour' (is meant) nothing but the Torah, as it is said: 'The wise shall inherit honour,'² 'And the perfect shall inherit good.'³ And there is no good but the Torah, as it is said: 'For I will give you good doctrine; forsake ye not My Torah.'⁴

- 4.⁵ (4) "This is the way of the Torah: A morsel of bread with salt⁶ shalt thou eat, 'and water by measure shalt thou drink,'⁷ and on the ground shalt thou sleep, and a life of weariness shalt thou lead, and in the Torah shalt thou labour. If thou doest thus, 'Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee';⁸ 'happy shalt thou be' in this world, 'and it shall be well with thee' in the world to come."
5. (5) "Seek not greatness for thyself, and covet not honour"; "Practise more than thou learnest";⁹ and "Lust not after the table of kings, for thy table is greater than their table, and thy crown¹⁰ is greater than their crown; and faithful is He who is the Master of thy work, who will recompense thee the reward of thy work."¹¹
- 6.¹² (6) "Greater is Torah than the priesthood and the kingdom;

¹ **how much more**: כַּמֶּה וְכַמֶּה, lit. "like what and like what?"

² **The wise shall . . .**: Prov. iii. 35.

³ **And the perfect . . .**: Prov. xxviii. 10.

⁴ **For I will give . . .**: Prov. iv. 2.

⁵ This is probably a new saying, the author being anonymous.

⁶ **A morsel . . .**: *i.e.* a poor man's fare.

⁷ **and water . . .**: Ezek. iv. 11.

⁸ **Happy shalt thou be . . .**: Ps. cxxviii. 2.

⁹ **Practise more . . .**: *cf.* the second saying in i. 17.

¹⁰ **thy crown**: *i.e.* the crown of the Torah; see iv. 17.

¹¹ **and faithful is He . . . thy work**: Quoted verbally from ii. 20.

¹² Again an anonymous saying: *cf.* iv. 17.

for the kingdom is acquired by thirty degrees,¹ and the priesthood by twenty-four; but the Torah is acquired by forty-eight things, and they are these: by learning with attentive ear,² by preparation of the lips,³ by a discerning heart,⁴ by dread, by fear, by meekness, by joy,⁵ by waiting upon the wise, by careful discussion with associates, by subtle argument with disciples, by diligent recourse⁶ to Scripture and Mishnah; with little worldly business,⁷ with little sleep, with little talk,⁸ with little luxury, with little laughter,⁹ with little secular occupation;¹⁰ by longsuffering, by kind-heartedness, by trust in the wise men, by (resigned) acceptance of chastisements. He who knows his place,¹¹ who rejoices in¹² his lot, who puts a restraint¹³ upon his words, who claims no merit¹⁴ for himself, who is beloved, who loves

¹ **degrees**: lit. "steps." With the form of the enumeration which follows *cf.* 2 Cor. vi. 4-10; xi. 23-27.

² **with attentive ear**: lit. "with the hearing of the ear"; the traditional teaching of the Torah was given by word of mouth, so one learned by hearing, not by reading, though after the Mishnah had been redacted this was of course read.

³ **by preparation of the lips**: *i.e.* for the purpose of repeating what was taught.

⁴ **discerning heart**: The heart was regarded as the seat of understanding.

⁵ **by joy**: One MS. adds: "by pureness."

⁶ **by diligent recourse**: lit. "by sitting."

⁷ **worldly business**: lit. "traffic," from the root סָוַר, "to go round," "to be busied"; *cf.* ii. 5.

⁸ **with little talk**: Two MSS. omit.

⁹ **laughter**: or "jesting"; *cf.* Eph. v. 4.

¹⁰ **secular occupation**: lit. "way of the earth" (דֶּרֶךְ אֲרֶץ); see note on ii. 2; the difference between this and "worldly business" above is that this latter refers to trade, the other to intercourse with others.

¹¹ **He who knows his place**: Some words, such as "the Torah is acquired by him," must be mentally supplied.

¹² **who rejoices in . . .**: *i.e.* one who is contented.

¹³ **who puts a restraint . . .**: lit. "who makes a fence (סָבַח, *cf.* i. 1) to his words."

¹⁴ **who claims no merit . . .**: *cf.* ii. 8 and note.

God,¹ who loves mankind, who loves almsgiving,² who loves guidance,³ who loves uprightness, who cares not⁴ for honours, who is not proud⁵ of his learning, who does not glory in a decision,⁶ who helps to bear the yoke⁷ with his associate, and who inclines to⁸ the scale of merit, who establishes him⁹ upon the truth, who establishes him upon peace, who sets himself calmly¹⁰ to his study, who asks¹¹ and answers, who hearkens and adds (to what is said), who learns for the purpose of teaching, who learns for the purpose of practising, who makes his teacher¹² wise, who marks carefully what he has heard, and who utters¹³ a saying in the name of him who said it; behold, thou hast learned¹⁴ (that) whosoever

¹ **who is beloved . . . God**: *cp.* ii. 13; the word for "God" is again *Makom*.

² **almsgiving**: lit. "righteousness"; *cp.* note on v. 15.

³ **who loves guidance**: This is what the phrase means; the word for "guidance" is lit. "rebukes" or the like.

⁴ **who cares not**: lit. "who keeps at a distance from."

⁵ **who is not proud . . .**: lit. "who is not puffed up in his heart."

⁶ **who does not glory . . .**: lit. "who does not rejoice"; the "decision" (החלטתו) refers to an accepted halakic or legal interpretation. Two MSS. add: "and who does run after (lit. 'pursue') honours."

⁷ **who helps to bear the yoke**: *i.e.* the yoke of the Torah; *cp.* iii. 6; for the construction *ישא בשלי נשאי* *cp.* Job vii. 13, *ישא בשלי משכבי*, "My couch shall ease my complaint"; the force of *ישא ב* is "shall bear together with," *i.e.* shall help to bear; so in the words before us, "he who helps to bear the yoke"; how he does this is shown in the words that follow.

⁸ **who inclines to . . .**: See note on ii. 2.

⁹ **who establishes him . . .**: lit. "who causes him to stand"; *cp.* i. 18.

¹⁰ **who sets himself calmly**: This seems to be the force of *מחישב*, a non-Biblical form; two MSS. unnecessarily add "his heart."

¹¹ **who asks . . .**: *cp.* v. 9.

¹² **his teacher**: lit. "his Rabbi."

¹³ **who utters . . .**: *i.e.* who gives out as his own something that he has learned from another.

¹⁴ **behold, thou hast learned**: What follows is a quotation from T.B. *Chullin* 104 b (Herford).

utters a saying in the name of him who said it brings redemption¹ to the world, as it is said: 'And Esther told it to the king in the name of Mordecai.'"

7. (7) "Great is Torah, which gives life to those who practise in this world and in the world to come, as it is said: 'For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh';² and it says (further): 'It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones';³ it says also: 'She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is everyone that retaineth her';⁴ it says also: 'For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thine head, and chains about thy neck';⁵ it says also: 'She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver unto thee';⁶ it says also: 'Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour';⁷ it says also: 'For length of days and years of life and peace shall they add unto thee.'"⁸

8. (8) Rabbi Simeon ben Menasia⁹ said in the name of¹⁰ Rabbi

¹ **redemption**: *geullah*; this word must, of course, not be understood in its present-day technical meaning; it is often used in Rabbinical literature in the sense of "protection," and that is probably what it means here, *i.e.* he who hands on a saying of his teacher is helping many others in the world, because the saying in question is able to act as a protection against evil thoughts or acts. The quotation from Esther ii. 22, which follows, bears this out.

² **For they are life . . .**: Prov. iv. 22.

³ **It shall be health . . .**: Prov. iii. 8.

⁴ **She is a tree of life . . .**: Prov. iii. 18.

⁵ **For they shall be . . .**: Prov. i. 9.

⁶ **She shall give . . .**: Prov. iv. 9.

⁷ **Length of days . . .**: Prov. iii. 16.

⁸ **For length of days . . .**: Prov. iii. 2. Note how the Torah is implicitly identified with Wisdom.

⁹ **R. Simeon ben M.**: He lived during the second half of the second century A.D.

¹⁰ **in the name of**: See notes on ii. 10; iii. 10.

Simeon ben Jochai:¹ "Beauty,² and strength, and wealth, and honour, and wisdom, and ripe age, and old age, and children, are an ornament² for the righteous, and an ornament to the world; as it is said: 'The hoary head is a crown of beauty, it is found in the way of righteousness';³ it says also: 'The glory of young men is their strength, and the beauty of old men is the grey head';⁴ it says also: 'Sons' sons are the crown of old men, and the glory of sons are their fathers';⁵ it says also: 'Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously.'"⁶

9. Rabbi Simeon ben Menasia said: "These seven qualities⁷ which the wise men have reckoned (as belonging) to the righteous were all of them realised in Rabbi and his sons."⁸
10. (9) Rabbi Jose ben Kisma⁹ said: "Once I was walking in the way, and a man met me, and greeted me,¹⁰ and I returned his greeting. He said to me: 'Rabbi, from what place

¹ **R. Simeon b. J.**: He lived a little earlier, middle of second century, than R. Simeon ben M.

² **Beauty; ornament**: These two words, יופי and תענוף, are radically connected; "Beauty" is explained as consisting of "strength, and wealth, etc."; these constitute the ornament called "Beauty." See note on next verse.

³ **The hoary head . . .**: Prov. xvi. 31.

⁴ **The glory of . . .**: Prov. xx. 29.

⁵ **Sons' sons . . .**: Prov. xvii. 16.

⁶ **Then the moon . . .**: Is. xxiv. 23.

⁷ **These seven qualities**: This bears out what is said in the note above ("Beauty; ornament"), for the qualities mentioned are seven, and these constitute "Beauty." The word for "qualities" is *middoth*; on this see note on v. 12.

⁸ **Rabbi and his sons**: See note on ii. 1.

⁹ **R. Jose ben K.**: He lived early in the second century A.D.

¹⁰ **greeted me**: lit. "gave me peace"; so, too, in the words that follow, lit. "I returned to him peace."

art thou?' I said to him: 'From a great city of wise men and scribes¹ am I.' He said to me: 'Rabbi, if thou be willing to dwell with us in our place I will give thee a thousand thousand dinars of gold,² and precious stones, and pearls.'³ I said to him: 'My son, if thou gavest me all the silver and gold and precious stones and pearls in the world I would not dwell excepting in a place of the Torah,⁴ since in the hour of his departure neither silver nor gold nor precious stones nor pearls accompany him, but only the Torah and good works, as it is said: "When thou goest it shall lead thee, and when thou sleepest it shall keep thee, and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee."⁵ "When thou goest it shall lead thee," (that is) in this world; "and when thou sleepest it shall keep thee," (that is) in the grave; "and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee," (that is) in the world to come. And so also it is written in the Book of Psalms by the hands of David, king of Israel: "The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver";⁶ it says also (elsewhere): "The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts."'"⁷

11. (10) Five⁸ possessions hath the Holy One—Blessed be He!—acquired in His world, and they are these: The Torah is one possession, the heavens and the earth are one possession, Abraham is one possession, Israel is one

¹ **scribes**: *Sopherim* = γραμματεῖς.

² **dinars of gold**: = *denarii* of gold; a golden *denarius* was worth 25 silver ones; both are often mentioned in the Mishnah; see further Schürer, ii. 73 f.

³ **pearls**: The word מרגלית = μαργαρίτις (*cp.* μαργαρίτης); it is used mostly in the plural; the phrase "white as a pearl (מרגלית)" occurs in T.B. *Yoma* 75 a (Jastrow); *cp.* Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

⁴ **a place of the Torah**: *i.e.* a place where the Torah was taught; see iv. 18.

⁵ **When thou goest . . .**: Prov. vi. 22.

⁶ **The law of Thy mouth . . .**: Ps. cxix. 72.

⁷ **The silver is Mine . . .**: Hag. ii. 8.

⁸ **Five**: One MS. reads "four."

possession, the House of the Sanctuary is one possession. The Torah is one possession; whence (is this proved)? In that it is written: 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old.'¹ The heavens and the earth are one possession; whence (is this proved)? In that it is written: 'Thus saith the Lord, The heavens are My throne, and the earth is My footstool; where is the house that ye build unto Me, and where is the place of My rest?'² It says also: 'O Lord, how manifold are Thy works, in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy possessions.'³ Abraham is one possession; whence (is this proved)? In that it is said: 'And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth.'⁴ Israel is one possession; whence (is this proved)? In that it is written: 'Till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over which Thou hast possessed';⁵ it says also: 'To the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.'⁶ The House of the Sanctuary is one possession; whence (is this proved)? In that it is written: 'The place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in; the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established';⁷ it says also: 'And He brought them to the border of His sanctuary, even to this mountain, which His right hand had possessed.'⁸

12.⁹ (11) "Whatsoever the Holy One—Blessed be He!—created

¹ **The Lord possessed me . . .**: Prov. viii. 22. The Torah again identified with Wisdom.

² **Thus saith the Lord . . .**: Is. lxvi. 1.

³ **O Lord, how manifold . . .**: Ps. civ. 24.

⁴ **And he blessed him . . .**: Gen. xiv. 19.

⁵ **Till Thy people . . .**: Exod. xv. 16.

⁶ **To the saints . . .**: Ps. xvi. 3.

⁷ **The place, O Lord . . .**: Exod. xv. 17.

⁸ **And He brought them . . .**: Ps. lxxviii. 54.

⁹ Another anonymous saying.

in His world, He created only for¹ His glory, as it is said: 'Everyone that is called by My name; for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him';² it says also: 'The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.'³

[In Taylor's edition the following saying, which is repeated at the end of each of the six chapters in the Wilna edition of the Talmud, is given. "Rabbi Chanania ben 'Akashia said: 'The Holy One—Blessed be He!—was pleased to give merit to Israel; therefore He multiplied unto them Torah and precepts, for it is said: "The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will magnify the Law, and make it honourable" (Is. xlii. 21).'"]

¹ **He created only for . . .**: lit. "He did not create but for . . ."

² **Everyone that is called . . .**: Is. xliii. 7.

³ **The Lord shall reign . . .**: Exod. xv. 18.

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